

PERSONAL OPINIONS

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BY

"RITA"



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PREFACE



I MAKE no excuse for expressing these opinions or presenting them in a new and complete form to the public. Many of them have been asked for, copied, quoted and criticised in magazines and in the columns of the daily Press. In gathering them into a volume I am following other notable examples, and can only hope that my temerity will pass muster as an instance of that "imitative" faculty of which I have accused my sex, and to whose rule I lay no claim to being an exception.

"RITA."

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PERSONAL OPINIONS



INTRODUCTION



THE BANE OF SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

THE BANE OF SOCIETY

THE bane of existence in these modern days is undoubtedly a wanton extravagance. The waste of wealth by one section of Society and the endeavour to compete with that standard of waste by another.

At all periods of the world's history the titled and exclusive members of Society have been the leaders of fashion. Court circles and nobility have claimed social prestige as their right. The uses made of that self-appointed right have not escaped criticism, rather have they challenged it. But as all things are pure to the pure, so all things are condoned to the rich.

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Occasionally . Society has shown some dignity, and some exclusiveness. Its pleasures have been neither morbid nor vicious, and its extravagances a mere use of the superfluous wealth in inherited coffers. But of late years, and noticeably in the present young century, the pursuit of pleasure has displayed a morbidity of taste and temperament that comes under the heading of vice, and every symptom of riotous money-wasting that can claim the title of extravagance. Men and women alike have flaunted their scandals and their immoralities in the face of the world. They have scarcely condescended to cloak their misdeeds with some flimsy pretence of eccentricity ; rather have they openly gloried and boasted of them. Heirs have been born to the peerage, but that sublime piece of fiction has asked no questions as to the domestic relations of the noble parents, or the terms on which aristocratic marriages are—endured ! Great names have distinguished the Bankruptcy Court, and the patronage of many a Society leader with a string of titles and an *entrée* to

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Court, has too frequently meant the ruin of her tradesmen, and the financial difficulties of her dressmaker.

The "smart" *modiste* who was first responsible for the Smart Woman must have often repented of her Frankenstein creation. As she built up and clothed the creature of her imaginative genius, she never dreamt of the hordes of imitators at her heels. Creator and created now stand side by side in the rank of fashion, and the demands of the one and the needs of the other make diverting reading in the daily press. Huge bills and dunning dressmakers and irate husbands are at once a wonder and a scandal. The senseless vanity of the fashionable woman is beyond all satire to touch, and all patience to reckon with. It is also almost beyond the credence of human sense. Herself and her appearance are apparently the twin gods she has elected to worship. Costly apparel, and costly subterfuge, and costly art, are all called in to assist at this Temple of Beauty, are all used as a means to an end—and that end the mere

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glorification of sex, the perpetual worship of vanity.

The great emporiums of fashionable milliners, dressmakers, and toilet specialists, are nothing less than a scandalous tribute to sensual deification.

From the first flimsy lace and silk articles of the toilette to the last crowning glory of gown and jewels, all spell money, money ! Money spent not wisely or unselfishly, or for the material benefit of less fortunate fellow-creatures, but money lavishly poured out at the shrine of senseless extravagance. Money won at the gambling-table, or the racecourse, or procured by means even less creditable to feminine honour. Money secured anyhow and anywhere, so only that the person of its owner may be singled out as the best-dressed or the "smartest" woman of her set.

Perhaps at no period of the world's history have its leading *modistes* played so important a part. They range from the lady of title who wishes to add to her insufficient income, down to the mere adventuress who puts up "Madame"

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as a qualification, and relies on her staff for results, and on credit as a "draw." Credit prices have been mostly shown to mean a mere hundred per cent. profit. But as a dressmaker has to rent a good business position, as her staff demand large weekly payments, as the credit of Paris and London drapery establishments is limited to quarterly or half-yearly settlements, it stands to reason that money must be forthcoming from somewhere. Therefore large profits have to compensate for occasional bad debts. And large profits mean exorbitant charges. The fashionable dressmaker of to-day is not contented with a mere show-room and fitting-room. She must have magnificent premises decorated and furnished in perfect style. She must have living models to show off her costumes; she must have a suite of fitting-rooms, where evening, morning, and other toilettes may be tried on. She, in fact, inculcates the laws of an inordinate extravagance in the minds of her clients and then leaves them to profit—by its teaching.

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The parade of wealth is as senseless as it is vulgar, but it is the cult of the day, and from the drawing-rooms of Buckingham Palace to the salons of Mayfair—from the lawns of Hurlingham to the "Sunday show" in the Park—from the racecourse to the river—from the houseboat to the yacht—from the lock-side to the grouse moors there is the same ceaseless "dressing of the part"; the everlasting changing of expensive and unnecessary costumes; the deification of sex as a mere clothes-peg for idiotic fashions and insane expenditure!

From time to time irate husbands expose their grievances in the law courts. From time to time the unprincipled system of the fashionable dressmaker is held up to public scorn. But it is all useless. The beauty of woman may be only "skin deep," but her vanity goes to the bone. And it is this vanity which revels in countless extravagances, which keeps her in a perpetual state of rivalry with her fellow-woman, which makes the fortunes of Madame the

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Modiste, and has been a source of income to the Beauty Specialist, that facial decorator, who professes to restore youth and retain loveliness with the aid of her pernicious trash, and all the array of paint, skin tonics, hair dyes, face masks, lotions, salves, and other paraphernalia that play their part in the morning and nightly toilet of the fashionable woman.

These decorative habits are also an additional expense to the mere necessities of dress. They would never have become habits but for the senseless creed of imitation. Whatever august personage sets the fashion it is an unwritten law that it must be followed. No matter how ugly, or unbecoming, or uncomfortable, or expensive is the *mode* of the hour, the great fact of its being the *mode* is an edict that needs no enforcement. I once met a woman who talked sensibly of dress and modern extravagance. "I consider it perfectly wicked," she said—"the sums that women spend on their toilet. Fifty guineas for a gown when you know that its whole

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material represents but the value of a five-pound note! And all because she must go to a fashionable dressmaker, who has the sense to make less fashionable clients pay for the discreditable titles who simply give cheques 'on account' and orders that are uncountable! Fifty guineas, even, twenty-five, for a flimsy, useless thing that can only be worn some half-dozen (or even less) times! Think of it! Why, what lots of useful, sensible, needful things one could buy for the same sum!"

"Yes," I agreed. "Even a Chippendale chair or an oak bookcase, and they will last and be a pleasure to look at when the gown is a mere rag!"

"I am giving up town life altogether," she continued. "It is sinfully extravagant. I shall live in the country, and have a serge coat and skirt and a plain straw hat, and spend the money I save on my house and garden and in helping the unfortunate. I've had to spend nearly a thousand a year on hats and gowns and their accessories in order

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to keep me in the swim. I shall not do it any longer."

Furthermore, she told me a tale of a pretty Society butterfly who openly declared that when she saw her first wrinkle or her first grey hair she should take a dose of poison immediately! She had lived but for vanity and pleasure—twin gods of modern woman. When her gods failed her there would be absolutely nothing left for her to do, save end her existence.

And this is but one of many instances I could give of the absolute sacrifice to that god of Vanity, than whom there is no greater tyrant nor crueller taskmaster. The certain fate that lies before such women has been predicted again and again, but though an angel from heaven stood up and proclaimed it in their ears, they would only scoff and laugh, and go straight to Madame la Modiste for a new hundred-guinea gown in which to play Bridge! Incidentally they might even criticise the celestial visitor's appearance, the arrangement of his draperies,

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or the more or less becoming effect of *real* wings!

To the possessors of great wealth it may seem a fitting, and indeed a compulsive duty to spend money lavishly, but while they have the means and the right at their disposal is it not a thousand pities that they disregard the power of example? That with so much poverty, suffering, hardship, and distress of every sort around about them they fling the princely gifts of fortune to the winds of every passing whim. That they waste on a gown—a hat—a jewelled bauble—a toy dog, what would support a whole poor family for a year. What might lighten the burden of the artist struggling to be known, the lot of the weary author grinding, grinding precious thoughts out of the ever-turning mill of his weary brain; the innumerable hardships and necessities of the workaday world at their doors.

A careless charity that means cheques to committees—the red tape and sealing-wax formulæ of lawyers, the petty bickerings and mismanagement of “Societies”—these are the

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usual recipients of the help of the wealthy. But the real charity of helpfulness—of delicate assistance, of aid given just at the right moment and to the right person—of these things they are professedly ignorant. They are things painful and distressing, and Society hates to be distressed ; to have to think ; to have to acknowledge that the glittering bauble of Pleasure flies always over and above some undercurrent of pain. That for the enjoyment of the few, the many suffer. Suffer, and are oppressed, until they can only curse life and die—glad for the one respite life at last allows them !

The wasteful extravagance of one section of Society points ever and always to that future of retribution which sooner or later must take vengeance on the vices and tyrannies of the rich. They meant the downfall of Babylon and of Rome in days of old. The overthrow of monarchy in later days. Does anyone pause to ask what they may mean also for England, and England's rulers, in the near future ?

PART I



PHASES OF WOMANHOOD

EDUCATION

IMITATION

RECREATION

USURPATION

DEMORALISATION

GENERALISATION

EDUCATION

THERE are many systems of education but all suffer more or less from *individual* uselessness.

It is an absolute waste of time to study subjects which have nothing to do with the future interests of life. The young have first to learn ; then to forget ; then to learn again. A vast amount of indigestible and undigested mental food is assimilated between the years of three and ten. Little, if anything, is taught thoroughly and sensibly from the beginning.

The very method by which a child learns its alphabet is wrong. The first capital letter, "A," is not impressed upon its mind as "A" pure and simple, but usually as the synonym of a green figure shooting a yellow arrow at some scarlet horned monster ! So on with other branches of education.

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Its first principles are the destruction of individuality—to congregate a small mass of human beings together and treat them like sausage machines. So much material, so much seasoning; turn a handle and grind out the contents. No matter whether the stuffing is of use to a future career, whether it is comprehended or mere parrot gabble, it has to go in *en masse* and come out in its neat little skin, and be strung up with other stuffed skins equally neat and pleasant to behold, but all equally the product of a system, and all equally useless when taken as equipment for life.

I have seen children in a little country village carrying violin cases day by day for instruction. I have interviewed servants who wanted at least an hour's daily practice on the piano. Had such individuals evinced real talent for music, well and good, but their reasons for taking up respective instruments were not convincing. One boy learnt the "fiddle" because "brother Jimmy had learnt it." A little girl practised scales and tortured the neighbours' ears—"cos mother" and a sister

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where children could all play 'toons.' Other quaint and equally satisfactory reasons have been given.

No one wishes to deny innocent recreation to the working or the middle classes. Anything that serves to lift them out of the dead level of uninteresting lives is to be commended. But a true appreciation of art will not come by strumming "toons," or scraping a fiddle, or emulating the vulgar successes of sand niggers.

With regard to higher-class education, its general purpose seems to be to create a craze for passing "exams.," and the glorious freedom of Girton and Newnham. But does it give a girl a mental or moral equipment for the demands of womanhood? Does it help her to understand the simplest duties of a household? Does it enable her to relieve a harassed mother of the burden of housekeeping, or to put her own shoulder to the wheel in some domestic breakdown?

We are not all born in the purple. Even prosperity has its hazards. And in certain

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circumstances showy accomplishments, even diplomas of efficiency in science, experimental physics, mathematics, classics and languages, are less useful than knowledge of domestic economy. The power of using money, not wasting it; the lightening of the burden that parent or husband has to bear, not the adding to it by the brilliant uselessness of an inadequate conception of life.

What *not* to learn should be as important a factor in the education of both sexes as what to study and assimilate. To be of any real value education should be individualised; but that being a seeming impossibility, its results are only too often significant of misplaced energy, of useless accumulations. Lumber-rooms take the place of suitably furnished apartments where the great work of life might be carried on to a profitable end.

There has been a recent discussion in the *Daily Press* as to whether women are really helpful. The question raised a storm of protest. It also made most men and a few women ask themselves if the subject had ever

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been dealt with from a standpoint of truth. If it were not just one of those "taken-for-granted" virtues to which the weaker sex has always laid claim? Lovely woman was none too well pleased by the severe criticism of her natural foe—man. She protested loudly of her valuable services, her patience under oppression, and her general superiority. Still men continued to write and speak very hard and unpleasant things about her.

Being asked to express my views on the matter, I could only assert that she was "a hard nut to crack."

When men try to generalise about women they find themselves floundering in a deep quagmire, for she is as many-sided and elusive as he is ponderous and simple. He will persist in judging the whole sex from one specimen who is either too faulty or too perfect for a type. For there are women so good, one can only marvel at them—and so bad, one can only stand helplessly before the barrier of "classification." There are contented women to whom the domestic sphere is

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everything; who are "useful," helpful, and devoted in that restricted area only. These virtues—like their home-made jams and pickles—they keep solely for their families. For nations, and kingdoms, and politics, they care nothing, so long as such generalities do not touch their own modest demands. For their bolder sisters who insist on what the Americans call "making a splash" they have a pitying contempt. But it is only contempt for what is not a personal concern. Much as the country-bred "matron" regards her "smart" sister, so does the domestic woman regard the shrieking, boisterous, ill-mannered suffragette! It would be impossible for her to step into the arena and "fight with beasts" (manly beasts) as at Ephesus. Such effrontery and bad taste make no appeal to her. In like manner, the woman who has divested her mind of all old-fashioned feminine prejudices thoroughly despises her sister of the hearth and the "feeding-bottle." Yet in the great issues of the world's happenings the real helper is she.

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woman of the home, not the yelling fiend of the platform, whose first claim on political influence is an example of defiance to law and order !

There has been much talk of the " Higher Education for Women." Has it been really beneficial—or has it merely fostered her intellectual vanity and set up a craze for emulating man? To such a woman the expression " Helpmate " is a stigma of shame. A mere feminine sphere of usefulness is unworthy of her acceptance, and apart from her ambitions. The ambitions of college life—of degrees ; all the glorious independence that begins with " cocoa " in her rooms (as a mild imitation of the undergraduate's " wines ")—and ends with a flat and her own latch-key and a prospective " career." A Girton girl always expects that !

The college girl has brought about the club woman, and sounded a challenge to domesticity. So men are disappointed, and say hard things, and write nasty, spiteful letters to the papers ; and then comes—re-

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taliation. Yet of one thing man may be sure, and that is, that in spite of college and club, no large body of women will ever hold together to their own entire satisfaction and his subjection. The natural feminine instinct is to look up to something greater, stronger, more courageous than itself. The feminine Achilles can, at her best, prove only an Amazon. But man holds the prerogatives of Achilles himself. °

Certainly the "higher education" has been useful in fostering a spirit of independence. But it is also responsible for the increase of vanity and the awakening of a spirit of emulation in matters that once belonged exclusively to the stronger sex. Women began by believing they could do everything their natural tyrant did as well, if not better, than himself. They are still unconvinced that successful imitation is not able to rank with achievement. They atone for natural incapacity by vigorous abuse. They have wrested from man's more chivalrous nature many concessions and privileges, only to

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turn round and be-little the concessions, and encroach on the privileges.

It is "higher education" that has led woman into the quagmire of elections, and exhibited her as an inconsistent socialist and a poorer "oratrix" (to coin an Americanism). It is "higher education" that is turning our sensible, middle-class girl into a cheap edition of her society sister. It is "higher education" that is abolishing the once respectful attitude of our servants and tradespeople; that has left no power to forbid Mary Jane her bicycle, or her lace-fronted blouse, or her own "at-home day" in the servants' hall. It is education at once unsuitable and unsuited that has created incompetence and discontent amongst all classes, and interfered with the efforts of individualism.

The late Dr. Jowett, of Balliol, is reported to have said he "hated learning." That it was a sad sight to see a man who was only 'learned' and nothing more—unable to make any use of his accumulated knowledge. For pro-

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gress, or mental improvement, learning without thought or imagination is worse than useless."

Great students are so occupied with heaping knowledge upon knowledge that the accumulated mass proves entirely useless for any special purpose. Books will not teach you how to live. Practical experience alone can do *that*; and to be active and useful and helpful to others is the best proof of an education that has had a wise and definite object for its starting-point.

For there is nothing in after life to atone for the wasted years of wasted youth. Nothing at once so hopeless and senseless as unpractical teaching.

That the teaching is cut out on one pattern and fitted to all sizes and conditions of youth redounds only to the discredit of the cutter and fitter.

A million times better is it to do one useful thing and do it well, than to fritter away time and energy and distaste on half a dozen showy accomplishments of no future benefit and of little credit to their exponent.

IMITATION

As a class, women are decidedly imitative, though they seem unconscious of the fact.

From her earliest age the small girl apes the doings of her elders, and—had she her own way—would be a miniature epitome of fashion. Such entertainments as she is permitted to witness in her mother's drawing-room she imitates with dolls and nurses for company in the nursery. In her schooldays she invariably "forms" herself on some special friend whom she elects as model of feminine perfection. And, at a certain stage of their life, girls are as much alike as peas in a pod! As they mature and develop they may perhaps show some signs of individuality, but in all the main issues of life they continue to be more imitative than original. Fashions, housekeeping, and entertaining are all more or less conducted on the

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same lines, and the only true sign of friendship shown to the young married woman is an entreaty to order her life and her home on her friend's principles. Any departure from those principles or any symptom of individual taste or strength of mind will sound the first challenge of unpopularity for the budding matron. Her mother and her mother's friends will alike desire imitation of their methods as the "sincerest form of flattery," and any decline from the original system will be pronounced wrong or injudicious.

Thus it seems that the New Woman era has evolved itself from very unpromising materials. But, regarded dispassionately, what does it really mean? Not that woman has ceased to be imitative. Far from it. Only that she has deserted one model for another. Instead of imitating her own sex she imitates man. Yes—sad, but true. The despised, downtrodden, abused and unvirtuous male has suddenly become the model for her own ambitions! She imitates his manners, his speech, his sports, his vices, and his cloth-

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ing! Whatever he does or has done she claims the power of doing. True—that as yet she has displayed no talent for science or mechanics. Nothing in any feminine way threatens Stephenson, Edison, or Marconi. But perhaps in the near future woman will conjure up a speedless motor car, or engineer a flying machine, or put the wonders of wireless telegraphy to shame! Still, even then she will only be imitative. She is not a pioneer, but a disciple, and her overweening ambitions are perpetually stopped by obstacles as unjust as they are humiliating.

At the present moment a brave and brilliant force of women martyrs are suffering for their attempt to abolish imitativeness. They want to be to the fore in the great march of woman's progress, to cease the humiliating "waiting on man's decrees" and on man's faulty laws, and to legislate for themselves. But, however laudable their intention may seem, it appears very irrational and in woefully bad taste to more judicious minds. The fact of wrestling with policemen, and venting hysterical wrath

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upon the country's legislators, and ensuring law and order is not conducive to sympathy. No sensible or refined woman would care to commend her cause to such violent partisans.

So in this unique instance of abolishing imitation and going for their own wants in their own fashion women have come worst off. Men may not display much dignity at election times, but these female rioters had not even the "party" excuse. They were their own leaders, their own advisers, their own assailants and patriots. And what is the result? They have only degraded themselves and their cause, and brought ridicule on both. A female vote would soon develop into the desire for a female Parliament. Hoardings, and hustings, and platforms would be crowded with the new pioneers of bullying, and the clamour of female tongues would inaugurate a new Babel of rebellion!

In contrast with this uproarious politician the merely modern woman of fashion represents a very harmless and senseless imitative faculty. She is content with the modes and

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whims of the day, the decrees of her "set," and the fanciful follies that are misnamed pleasure. But in like manner, as she imitates her "leaders" so is she imitated by the lesser and inferior circles below her own social scale. There seems no individuality in England. No one is so sure of himself or herself as to act independently, or dress without regard to some tailor's or modiste's idiotic dictates. To cite one instance—look at the motor-veil craze, and see what it has done for women. They have turned into a voluntary "Face-ache Brigade." Each member has her head tied up in the hideous gear, whose only excuse was to be found in a motor car. But when girls and women of all classes are to be seen in the street making a pudding-basin of their heads, regardless of the fact that they have never been in a motor car in their lives, what are we to say of the "imitative faculty"?

Where the said faculty is concerned with fashion it becomes a sort of mania. It proves conclusively that women are really very vain and very silly—taken as a class. They only

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need to be told such and such a thing is the fashion, and forthwith they adopt it, however ugly, however uncomfortable, and however unbecoming. The craze of cheap imitations has turned into our streets a procession of imitators. Girls of every class, with the "lace-chested blouse," the short elbow sleeve, the mock pearl necklet, and the motor-cap and veil at its side, have been appalling spectacles the whole summer through! Has the dread word "tartan" been whispered as an autumn suggestion? Then, indeed, we may expect to see stripes and squares gone mad in every colour and combination that can appeal to Celtic taste—or the lack of it.

Many years ago there was a craze to be photographed as a "professional beauty." It sent women trooping to studios, and depicted them in all sorts of ridiculous poses and attire. In mimic snow-storms and impossible "boudoirs." In too much dress, or—too little. It made modesty of no account, so only the shop-windows proclaimed popularity. That craze has now been put out of mind by

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the Post-card actress. She meets your eye wherever you look, and she—by way of proving her sex's love of imitation—is a perfect example of my text. First of all, no self-respecting "Gaiety girl" could be photographed unless she wore a huge "picture" hat. Then one lamentable day some stage favourite took it into her head to be photographed as a "dental" advertisement.

Forthwith every photographic actress broke into broad grins before the camera, and vied with her professional sisters in the art of advertising some pet dentrifice.

Everywhere flashes the same "double row" of pearls—or their imitation; from every magazine and output of the pictorial press the "broad grin" of the ever-smiling "Dollies" and "Mollies" meets our eye, until we are sick to death of the sight, and almost long for a new craze to step in, if it would only abolish that dental grin for ever!

Even in the present strained situation of Non-Female Franchise, woman is persisting with the game of Follow-my-Leader. First

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of all, some three or four martyrs chose to go to prison for their principles; on the next mission of rioting, the number was doubled or trebled. There seemed something great and glorious in imitating such illustrious examples; and if this imitative faculty persists, we shall soon require new prisons and a new staff of officials to control the demands of flattering enthusiasts!

And yet, with clearer judgment and cooler brain, woman might be just as effective and infinitely more useful. She has a very wide sphere for the exercise of her energies, would she but use those energies in a more rational manner. She might even—in time—discover that Providence has given her a very responsible place in the scheme of creation. But that place is womanhood, not imitative masculinity.

Woman's great argument is that her present aggressive symptoms are the result of past centuries of oppression. Perhaps they are. When the cork is removed from a bottle of soda-water the result is fussy and noisy. But

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once effervescence has exhausted itself the liquid is comparatively quiet. Let us hope the suffragette, the motor-maniac, and the physical exercise-enthusiast are the effervescent particles of long bottled-up energies. And if those energies are once exhausted good may result. The imprisoned martyrs may regain some degree of common sense. The motorists may discover that human life is, after all, a better thing than express speed; and women may at last begin to cater for the respect of men and the admiration of the world by wiser methods than extravagance of fashion and vagaries of platform oratory.

RECREATION

HERE I am treading on very delicate ground, and ought to approach my subject warily and with due deference to existing prejudices. The English girl and the English woman of to-day are no longer trammelled by old-fashioned scruples as to what to do, say, or attempt. But, whether as girl or woman, their bold adventuring into all realms of sport and athleticism has lately come in for fierce criticism. Indeed the change in the English girl of modern days is appalling. She is bold, self-confident, self-assertive. She openly rebels against anything so old-fashioned as parental control. She has great ideas of independence. She is quite sure she can "do something." Hence we are constantly presented with the sight of weak and immature efforts in art, and literature, and various

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other phases of work by women workers. The modern girl hails with joy the opportunity of university contests. She is invading every province of man's activity, and utterly disregarding the fact that there is no one to take up the role she has relinquished. I have always maintained that woman, once given her head, would dash off at break-neck speed, regardless of havoc or the inevitable "smash" at the end of her bolt. For, by nature, she is impetuous and illogical. She rushes at ideas, especially when they possess the charm of novelty, and never pauses to look ahead for results.

She has shown this failing in a very marked manner by the way she has taken up sport, and games, and every athletic pursuit of man. The meaning of moderation is unknown. She never seems to consider that nature has given to woman a different physique from that of man; that she is handicapped by laws relegating her to care of her person and her health under severe penalties. She would rather brave the penalties than

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pretend to prudent consideration of physiology.

It is this type of girl—the hard, knock-about, “sporting” girl—who offers man a wide field of speculation in the problem of life companionship. She is not manly enough for one side of his nature, nor womanly enough for the other. With her slang terms, her mannish dress, her avowed tastes for cigarettes and “big drinks,” her brusque, rough, overbearing manners, her perpetual “chaff,” or her perpetual silly laughter, she is at once an annoyance and an object lesson. A lesson in what to avoid, not in what to admire.

What can men think of women who openly avow that “domesticity” is a bugbear, and that children are a “hateful nuisance”? I have heard these expressions on countless occasions from the lips of “sportswomen.” True that the speakers were strong and hardy and an “all-round-good-sort,” to quote their male friends’ definition; but they were not lovable, not feminine, certainly not attractive or humane. No sportswoman can be that. She

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has but one conception of intelligence—her own. That it leads her to cruelty, to recklessness, and coarsens all the finer instincts of her nature matters nothing. She has no sympathy with the lovely free things of wood and moor ; of loch and river. To her they are merely "sport." She would shoot them without a pang ; hunt them to their death-agony unmoved ; strip them of fur and feather and plume for her own adornment, and then cry shame on the naked beauties of—uncivilisation ! She does these things, and is rearing a new race of sexless athletes to do them also. She has apparently no regard for the qualities of mercy, or the dull and unexciting life of home ; yet she expects man to admire, to love, and to honour her because she is still—Woman.

There is another evil apparent, as result of woman's dominance and independence. It is the lessening respect man shows for her, the manner in which he permits her to do for herself the countless little offices once accounted as his privilege. Seldom

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does he trouble to offer her a seat in crowded 'bus or train, to open a door, to offer a chair, to attend to her needs and save her from rough sights or shocks. She has plainly shown him she requires no care, that she is quite capable of looking after herself. He, therefore, stands aside and permits her to do so.

Love, poetry, chivalry, romance cannot flourish in an atmosphere of cigarette smoke, or be inspired by a snorting motor, or a tough golf contest. The more woman intrudes upon man's province, the less he regards her from any point of sentiment. He is less careful of his manners and his conversation. He tells her stories that once would never have passed his lips out of his club smoking-room. And she, in her own club sanctum, retails them before other women, with whisky-and-soda at their elbow and their favourite brand of cigarette tainting breath and room in the sickening modern fashion. How can we expect such women to bring up a new generation of femininity? Probably it will be one of Fresks!

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One can only trust that the supply will meet the need; that the generation, or generations, to come will suit their new environment; that the equality of the sexes, once proved, will form a satisfactory solution to its present riddle; that the doubtful blessing of over-education, which tempts girls from home to the delusive freedom of college life, and, later on, to latch-key and "flat" and "a career," may prove the boon it certainly is not—at present. That marriage, having ceased to be desirable, some less arduous institution may prove more successful. That our young modern Amazon may show herself as fitted for her country's defence as for limiting its population. That the Utopia to which the world is progressing may do one of two things: either relegate woman to the old simple natural life ordained by nature and by God, or make her so far man's superior that he will cease to struggle for supremacy, and take up the duties she has discarded.

The laments over a decreasing birth-rate and increasing dislike of the restrictions of

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marriage are at present a topic of social interest on both sides the Atlantic. The gospel recently preached by the President of the United States is one that is sane and sound, and an appeal to reason and common sense. But the question remains, are women capable nowadays of reasoning on so important a subject as present martyrdom for future good? For "martyrdom" is what they call the dull, housewifely, maternal routine of half a century back. They have left all that behind, thrown it to the winds of heaven, along with parental authority and wifely obedience. So poor distraught man can only shrug his shoulders and denounce them in his heart, as President Roosevelt has done by word of mouth.

But when she has taken everything from him—his stature, his vices, his ambitions, his duties, his professions, his amusements, his freedom, and his power—what place is he to have in the new future?

If she is ruler, he must be slave. If she is the bread-winner, he must content himself with domestic duties. If her flagrant vanity

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has set her upon a pinnacle of pre-eminence, what power or persuasion of mere man will ever make her step down and sit at his footstool as of old, and know no greater bliss than his praise, no sweeter guerdon than his love? But will there be love in those new days? How is it to be fostered when all poetry, art, and imagination have been killed out of man by the emancipated female victor? She will be his comrade, his equal, perhaps his superior, but never again queen of his heart and soul; the inspiration of chivalry, the fair and cherished ideal of youth and manhood.

Let her pause and think before she sets such trifles as these at naught! One day she may need them, seek them even with tears, and need and seek in vain!

The Woman's Movement can no longer be laughed at. It has to be reckoned with. But the danger attending on her resolute efforts at independence is one to which she is apparently blind. She sees the open door, and rushes to its promised freedom, but does

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she see what lies beyond ; what man has tried to save her from experiencing—the daily drudgery, the heart-breaks, the trials, the tricks and shams, the dishonesty and dishonour of the world of trade and labour, the disillusion of the world of art ?

And with all these no lovely life of home. No pure and simple peace ; no blessed rest ; no sympathy of strong nature for weak, since, if she has chosen to assert herself the stronger, she must in very self-defence show no weakness.

She has professed herself tired of shelter, and deference, and subjection, but it will need more than a generation to quite eradicate some lingering longing for these things. They are co-existent with her own place in the scheme of creation, and they are hard to kill. She is unfair to herself in trying to kill them, for the most beautiful thing in humanity is the little babe in its mother's arms, and the divinest is—motherhood.

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THE existing state of Society has led to many complicated and strained situations not only between husbands and wives, but between parents and children.

Not long ago a fierce controversy was waged in a daily paper headed, " Revolting Daughters." It threw a lurid sidelight upon the oft-quoted " sanctity " of English homes. It proved that the modern mother and the modern daughter were not only estranged, but in many instances rivals and enemies. Rivals for the admiration and attention of men ! Not unfrequently the same man. Such a condition of affairs is both humiliating and contemptible. To go into the question of " fair-play " one would naturally imagine that the mother of a grown-up daughter might be content to leave the field open for the new-

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comer. She has had her day, made her conquests, won her victories; surely she need not usurp her daughter's privileges or grudge her a turn of "sport." For under that heading come the present exciting, intriguing flirtations which seem inseparable from the amusements of modern Society.

But the modern woman usurps all or any rights save those of—Age. So long as she can keep up in the race, dance, golf, motor, skate, and complete a dozen engagements during the twenty-four hours, she is as acceptable at forty as she was at twenty-four. She looks twenty-four still, in certain lights, and by judicious aids from beauty-doctors. She is bent upon preserving that illusion. To the detriment of reason, of bodily strength, and of that real and only beauty possible to old age, good health and placid content, the modern woman persists in her suicidal attempt to be still young, "larky," and go-ahead. The tyranny of social life has her in its grip, and will not suffer her to escape. Thus it is that we are constantly presented in the present

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day with the spectacle of women doing the same things as their daughters, and making up to look almost as young.

The insane follies of such women would fill volumes. One can only wonder at, one cannot explain them. The latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century will assuredly be signalised by the crimes of "Smartness." They are silly enough to arouse universal condemnation, and serious enough to make thoughtful minds question the sanity of such vice-ridden exponents. The late Queen sensibly lamented the day of Woman's Rights and Woman's Independence. She saw rocks ahead, and many a frail barque steering in self-willed obduracy straight for those rocks. Perhaps she read the danger-signals of the future, and dreaded the social wrecks that have since strewn, and are still bound to strew, the shores of Time.

Once given her head a woman makes short work of bit and bridle. She bolts wildly into freedom. Since first she lectured of her rights, and secured them, she has overturned

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the whole old-time fabric of womanly duties. She does only what she pleases. She apes man in his sports, his professions, his dress, his habits, and his vices. His virtues she still leaves severely alone. Honour, loyalty, and courage are mainly his prerogatives. So also is friendship.

No woman was ever loyal to another woman as a man is to a man. She is too vain and too jealous to make a good friend. She lacks *esprit de corps*. Feminine devotion is rarely given to a woman more beautiful, more gifted, or more successful. To a man the good looks and superior gifts of his friend are subjects of pride and admiration. To a woman, save in very rare instances, these advantages are only food for envy. That is one reason why the modern woman, who is a social queen of any distinction, dreads the day when she must give place to her young, perhaps more beautiful, daughter, and play the unthankful part of chaperon. She knows she will be criticised by those wondering eyes; that her toilet secrets and

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her aids to beauty will be known at last. That her flirtations and inanities are exposed to the criticism of a critic sterner than most of her set. That her shabby subterfuges, and white lies, her meanness, her debts, her "little gambles" at Bridge, her unpaid dressmaker, her curious "tame cat" friend, will one and all come in for censure, or require explanation.

The old familiar legends of motherly love and daughterly companionship have no meaning for these modern mothers. They are as mythical as *Æsop's Fables*; as much a part of ancient history as Mangnall, or Macaulay, or Ollendorf.

And why?

The only possible answer lies in the craze for juvenility.

The insensate vanity at the bottom of most women's natures was forced prominently to the surface when the Professional Beauty became of such vast social importance. Once thrown Fashion-wards by an upheaval of caprice she did her best to keep in the front rank of notoriety. The

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Life is less significant now than it was, but the craze for notoriety has not lessened. The Beauty of to-day wears the laurels of "smartness," and has set herself the by-no-means easy task of startling, amusing, and entertaining Society without intermission.

Think of it !

To be always bright, smart, alert, vigorous, well "groomed," inventive, and tireless. To be in the swim of all that is most *chic*, and, specially, most notorious. To look well, and dress well. To have (or seem to have) money enough for every extravagance, every craze, and every necessity of social "smart" life.

Beside such strenuous exertions the restless monkey of the Zoo is a mere arm-chair recluse, and the parrot a bird of wisdom ! Yet this is the spectacle constantly presented by the London season ; the autumn house-parties ; the winter sports. By London, Paris, Homburg, Nice, and Monte Carlo in succession. By "cure" resorts and health resorts. By all that restless, noisy, "before-the-curtain" existence which represents Society.

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LET it be well understood that under this heading I am only dealing with a phase of womanhood and a special class of women. The stolid, sensible British matron, the well-brought-up English maiden have nothing to do with this chapter, and can miss it if they please.

In introducing the subject of "demoralised woman," I am compelled to introduce the much-abused, much discussed topic of the "smart set." I am also—reluctantly—obliged to go back to a period when I first discovered that literary honesty is not the best policy. Far from it.

To speak an unpalatable truth openly and fearlessly is the last thing a writer should dare to do. It brings down universal opprobrium, and opens a channel to the petty

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spite and covert abuse of the diplomatic order of press censors.

In 1904 I wrote a series of articles on certain notorious scandals, for which society was famous. I had excellent authority for my statements ere facing the ordeal of publication. Now that the first wrath and indignation of the "defenders" have exhausted themselves, it is amusing to go back and confute accusation by its own contradictions.

In the first place, I was loudly and emphatically assured that there was no such thing as a "smart set." In the next—that if there were women and men such as I had satirised, they were no worse than bygone generations of women and men who breathed that rarer and finer atmosphere, yclept Society, of which mere literary ink-slingers—such as myself—had no knowledge!

A few kindly "fellow scribblers" also made the discovery that I had written these articles as an advertisement and for the notoriety they would bring in their train. Others tried to egg on some member of these

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"smart" and august sinners to denounce me and defend themselves, but of all the assertions called forth by what I wrote, none amused me so much as the persistence that no "smart set" existed save in my imagination, and in the frenzied columns of the American Press! The pot boiled, and seethed, and bubbled, and finally its contents seemed exhausted, until Mr. Alfred Sutro set the matter going again with a play on the same lines as my articles. Here, then, was proof that such a "set" did exist, and the enormous success of *The Walls of Jericho* furnished critics and journalists anew with subject for controversy. Still a few faithful adherents to the great and noble cause of Society kept to their guns. There was no such thing as a "smart set." The dramatist, like the novelist, only imagined such people, and used them as puppets for his self-advertisement. Then appeared Miss Corelli with a series of articles in the *Bystander*. She had discovered a "smart set." One even a few degrees worse than mine or Mr. Sutro's. But the climax

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came with Father Vaughan's sermons last season. What I had denounced, or Mr. Sutro's characters had performed, or Miss Corelli's violent pen portrayed, were all as nothing beside the scathing denunciations of a Jesuit preacher.

Here, indeed, was piquancy to tickle the palate. Here was preaching worth hearing as a prelude to Church Parade, and the comparative dulness of Sunday luncheons ! Society flocked to hear itself abused, scolded, and exploited as an example in what to avoid. And at last no one denied there was a " smart set."

No journalist had the temerity to denounce the indignant Father as untruthful. A mild hint that he was exaggerating ; a subtle innuendo that his reverence had not been averse to accepting the invitations and mixing with the giddy crowd of motorists, adulteresses, and dishonest millionaires he scourged so relentlessly,—these were all that met him on his war path ! Decadent civilisation forgot to yawn—forgot to be bored. It really enjoyed its punishment. And then—

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well, it just went on in the same old way, and it will go on in the same "old way," as long as Time has any meaning. I said once that if an angel from Heaven stepped into the midst of a Society drawing-room, the guests would only criticise the folds of its drapery, and marvel if its wings were uncomfortable !

The world has grown callous to all higher, purer, nobler things than just—self-interest. You may scourge it, scorn it, satirise it as you please, but you shall not move it one inch from its pedestal of indifference. You shall not alter, by so much as one amended vice, its corrupt self-content, or its craze for physical self-indulgence.

Will all Father Vaughan's vehement rhetoric restrain one worldly mother from selling her daughter next season to the highest bidder in the matrimonial market ? Will it postpone one party of Sunday Bridge ? Will it make one keeper-up of appearances more honest in paying her debts, more honourable in her shabby but convenient "friendships." Will

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it send one man of business to his office on Monday morning purer of heart or cleaner of spirit? I fear not. Social and commercial enterprises never have had, and never can have, anything to do with the religion or teaching of Christ, and the effort to serve two masters has never been anything but a failure. Still it would be a sad thing for authors, preachers, and dramatists if there were no sins to scourge; no sinners to exploit as examples.

The world, being as it is, confronts us daily with the problem "Why was there ever a world at all?" It also presents an unanswerable riddle. The extraordinary fascination of evil.

In olden times women were carefully kept from the knowledge of such vices as now form common topics for boudoir gossip. But man has no longer the prerogative of the "naughty story" or the last scandal of the demirep. The woman of to-day can "cap" all his stories and improve on his shady acquaintance with demi-mondaines, their special "pro-

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ceptors" and their erratic doings. In fact, up-to-date smartness is so close to the border line of impropriety that there is little to choose between them save that one class does secretly what the other does openly. One pillages with both hands and the other graciously accepts "assistance" for its debts and obligations, giving a personal I O U as payment.

The shallow pretences of the "smart woman" force her frequently into undignified and ambiguous positions. Her habits are modelled on examples of ruinous extravagance and senseless follies. She must be "in" everything and do everything that is the craze of the hour or the fashion of the season; and she cannot drive, or motor, or eat a restaurant dinner, or walk down Bond Street, or sit in a stall at the theatre without having these interesting facts chronicled in some so-called fashion paper.

All public functions, from a charity bazaar to a "private view," from the latest fashionable "confession box" to the newest fashionable pastime, are to her but the setting of herself

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in a framework of notoriety. She would rather be talked about and stared at by a class who despise her, than respected by one laying no claim to smartness.

The various idiocies and absurdities of fashion were exposed and ridiculed before ever the "smart set" of America took it into its head to give "appendicitis dinners," and invite the *elite* of New York aristocracy to feast in a stable with horses, or turn a dining-table into a gondola.

But, until that American contingent began to "run" our dukedoms and finance our impoverished aristocracy, Society, at least, was free from the glaring bad taste of the present day. Now the keynote of success seems to be costliness and show—not good taste or refinement. In America the test of superiority is only the price paid. English society could at one time afford to ignore millionaire freaks by right of birth and breeding; but alas! the millionaire has taken his place in the front row of popularity. He hob-nobs with Royalty, and is the pet of duchesses whose

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ancestors would have shut their doors in his face !

He is beloved of "smartness," because smartness is an expensive fad, and must occasionally throw cheques and banknotes at clamorous Cerberus by way of sop to his demands; and the millionaire, whether he is of Chicago, or New York, or Kansas City, or South Africa, is generally very obliging to social sponsors.

One of the very journals that accused me of "inventing" a "smart set," and exaggerating its peccadilloes, has recently discovered that I was *almost* correct in my statements. That not only is there such a set, but that wealthy parvenus are only too willing to *pay* for its notice and to "run" its entertainments at their own expense so that their names appear among the invited guests! Nay, more, that they accept meekly the affronts of the very persons whose entertainment they have paid for, and are *not* permitted to ask any friends of their own. All this information was decided when I wrote my exposure of "smart set" practices. Of course, now that the

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"*Journalee*" gives it in a sixpenny paper, it is credited and lamented with much "head-shaking." In like manner, Father Vaughan's repetition of the very same statements I made is accepted as "gospel-truth"; yet only two years ago I was pilloried by the entire press for publicly denouncing scandals that have made Society a by-word amongst the sensible, clean living, and thoughtful section who may be *in* yet not *of* it.

Looking back on our aristocracy is to view a not altogether edifying spectacle. ~~Their~~ Their manners and morals—like some origins—are a doubtful benefit to their race or the circle they ought to adorn. Extravagance and uselessness are only the mildest of their faults. Possibly those faults are the outcome of long traditions of training; simply *les défauts de leurs qualités*. They would not be worth considering seriously if they only affected themselves and their immediate circle; but, unfortunately, they set an example, and one that less important mortals are quick to copy; by reason of which much is excused.

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To call vice by new names, and to sin riotously and gaily is no doubt a very pleasant and harmless pastime.

But to the "looker-on" and the student of life and nature, results are infinitely more serious than the gay sinners acknowledge. And though Society scorns texts as the mere cant of Nonconformity, there is one it might learn with advantage, • "By their fruits ye shall know them."

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IN soul, mind, and body woman differs essentially from man. The sexes are not only opposite, but antagonistic. Hence the war now raging between them on points of political, social, and public interest. Only at one period of life and under one condition is there a truce between man and his natural enemy. That period is the blind, besotted stage of passion. But passion is an episode, or series of episodes. It drugs the moral sense and endows the physical with charm such as it never possessed.

Of love—beautiful, eternal, soul-filling—all humanity dreams, and all humanity sooner or later awakes from its dream. Love—as imagined—is never love as it proves. There may be fortunate people who declare experience has come up to their expectations, but

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they are the rare exception ; and their blissful exemption from a common fate arises probably from a disposition to content itself with the "second best," seeing that perfection is impossible.

Love is really only an episode in life of which marriage is the result. A result enforced by social and moral laws ; a result of enormous benefit to woman and enormous martyrdom to man. For man was not created for fidelity. One woman alone in a world of women may charm him to outward or temporary allegiance, but the other women have had, or will have their hour, just the same. A man looks upon a chain as something to break—a woman regards it as an ignoble fetter. Through past ages and up to the present time men and women have aired their antagonism and abused each other frankly for being what they are. Each hopes to improve or alter the other, and by doing so usually enacts the part of Frankenstein to some altogether impossible creation. It seems, however, as if in the present century women were going to try new

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tactics. They want to abolish man by methods which refuse him wifehood or motherhood.

This sounds a little confusing, but it is a theory evolved from woman's persistent endeavour to usurp man's prerogatives and banish him from her schemes of future civilisation. No doubt it is very humiliating to have to acknowledge his use in the world, and to accept her own part in the scheme of nature. But facts remain a stolid phalanx opposed to the impetuous or injudicious forces arrayed against them, and, whether Eve or Adam were the greater sinner, it is certain that "subjection" was her sentence, and she will never really overthrow its influence.

But, looking dispassionately at the struggle going on and regarding it as momentous, one can but ask of woman an account of her previous stewardship in her own sphere of life and action?

Has she shown herself so rational or so skilful in matters appertaining to domestic welfare that she should boldly assert her capacity for National Government.

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To go back to that vexed point, the servant question, how often is it the mistress who makes bad servants by her own tyranny and mismanagement, rather than the bad servant who deserves to be denounced by the mistress?

If the records of the servants' hall and the registry office were frankly revealed we should learn enough of ill-governed households, misdirected energies, and inhuman exactions to account for all the insubordination of which women complain. A servant is but human—but the last person to remember that seems her mistress. She wants a perfect-going machine, with no faults, no temper, no individuality. A something that will work from morning till night, that must never be tired, never be ill, and never want a holiday. That will put up with any sort of food, any sort of room, and any sort of treatment.

Is it a distinct mark of woman's advance in the world that her social inferiors have resolved to advance with her; that she has to reckon not only with man but with her own assertive domestic? Mary Jane will no longer be content

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with small wages and hard work, with alternate Sunday afternoons, and the obligations of cap and apron. If women are coming to the front in social and public affairs then she will demand consideration also, and as "mistress" has hitherto represented an abhorred tyranny, so much the worse for the tyrant when the slave learns the full meaning of emancipation. •

America has wrestled with the servant problem until it has almost abolished home-life, and is compelled to bribe heavily for even the pretence of "servitude." In the colonies, where women have secured the suffrage, the complaints against servants are endless. It only remains for the same thing to happen in England, and set the officious and over-zealous clamourers for equal rights to cook their own dinners, do their own laundry work, answer their own doors, and be nursemaids to their own children! Let us hope that one of the first efforts of the socialist women will be to liberate the unfortunate "flunkey" from his humiliating position. To show him that

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no self-respecting block of manhood should ever allow itself to be decked in a "livery," or wear powder, or dance attendance on the behests and whims of a titled or wealthy mistress! Here, indeed, is need of reform. The extravagance, waste, and insolence of flunkeydom. Yet who would be more amazed than the Liberal or Radical enthusiast whose footman refused to carry her parcels, or bring in her tea-tray?

Is the country very grateful at the present moment to those zealous female politicians who fought for votes, and bribed, coaxed, wheedled, or frightened a bewildered constituency to return a Liberal Government this past session! A Government whose treachery and folly have set the "dogs of war" once more howling in blood-stained South Africa; whose false economies are making England a laughing-stock and a by-word; and who are already repenting of luke-warm promises given to that active aggressor, the suffragette?

But if woman has not specially distinguished

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herself in the domestic or political sphere, what of her business-like qualities?

Does she shine specially as office-clerk, typist, shop-girl, journalist?

Her qualifications seem better expressed by the cheapness of her services than by their actual worth. All honour to the girls who seek independence for good reason, but what of the numbers who do it for sake of securing liberty, living their own life, and making money to spend on senseless fashions that will make them "ladies!"

Ladies! Heaven save the mark!

The girls who throng our city and west-end streets at luncheon-time offer a fine satire on that craze for imitation already spoken of. Their awful "picture" hats, their cheap blouses, their open necks, their mock pearls, their poor imitation of "Bond Street," the whole tawdry paraphernalia of vulgar finery that meets the eye, not individually but "whole-sale," is proof and to spare that the working-woman has not even mastered the first essential

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of her class—a suitable and sensible mode of dress.

Who asks for a third-rate copy of the last mode of hair-dressing, or the transparent blouse or elbow-sleeve of the *dernier cri* in a girl who has to sit all day at a type-writer or work at an office desk? When such girls meet with insults or familiarities from men it is entirely their own fault. They neither look respectable nor exact respect. When a woman seeks independence she should certainly prove her equipment for it by neatness, and simplicity, and good taste, not by emulating the demi-monde in attire to "catch the eye."

The shop-girl has fortunately to thank her employer—man again—for instituting the neat black gown that offends no one and emphasises good looks to an extraordinary degree. But the shop-girl, like the "lady" post-office clerk, has much to learn in the way of good manners. At least, she is chary of exhibiting politeness to her own sex. If a "mere man" comes in to make a purchase

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or buy a stamp, *that* is a totally different matter.

Passing from official capacity to journalistic I will frankly ask why it is that almost all the Ladies' Fashion papers and magazines are edited, contributed to, and conducted by—Men?

Man writes most of the serials and principal articles, sees to letter-press and copy and proof correcting, and manages the advertisements without which no modern journal of any literary pretensions can exist! To woman is relegated the silly portions of the paper. The "twaddle" in the shape of a weekly letter to "Amy" or "Ethel" respecting fashion, society, and impossible recipes for home cookery. To woman, also, has it been given to invent a novel and personal form of communicating "fashionable" intelligence—a method not specially appreciated by anyone possessed of good taste, or common sense.

She is also responsible for the recommended abominations in the shape of "make-up" quack remedies, and toilet deceptions that seem

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inseparable from the "Woman's Column." Her ignorance of possible harm pleads no excuse for the injury she does. Many an unfortunate girl has had her appearance ruined for life by using the depilatories, face-creams, washes, and powders so gaily recommended by this doubtful benefactress. Nostrums for reducing the figure, improving the bust, or lessening waist measurements are most dangerous, and have no business to appear in the innocent guise of "Advice."

If the readers of such advice were not so dull they would draw the natural inference between the thing advertised in the advertisement columns, and the thing recommended by the Adviser. They would see that as a certain amount of money goes into the journal, a certain amount is expected to return to the advertisers! But here again is proof that the vast majority of women never question what concerns their vanity.

But perhaps the greatest achievement of the woman journalist has been the "personal" style of her society paragraphs. Here she is

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indeed on congenial soil ! Matters relating to social functions, such as balls, wedding toilettes, and other "entertaining" subjects were willingly relegated to her by her male coadjutor. He had no taste for fripperies and less skill in describing them. At first she was cautious of treading on delicate ground ; but soon, with the assurance born of "a little brief authority," she began to introduce free-and-easy personalities into her descriptions. It was "I saw Lady A—— in the Park looking so smart in violet cloth and chinchilla," etc. ; or "The Luncheon, or At Home, or Concert of the Duchess of B—— was really *very well done*," as if the writer had been an invited guest !

A further affront to good taste always seems to me that familiar method of mentioning "who" walked in the Park with "whom" —as if such a matter were of vital importance to the world at large !

The patronising pertness which describes an important entertainment as being "very well done" is only on a par with the ignorance

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of the function patronised. But it carries weight with the reader. In like manner the new mode of describing some young Society beauty or titled *débutante*, as Lady or Countess So-and-So's "girl" is in very bad taste, and leaves one wondering why the "girl's" mother or father does not complain of journalistic freedom.

This writer's style of expressing herself is, of course, intended to convey that she is on terms of equality with the social stars of whom she writes.

When the *Daily Mirror* was first started it was confidently announced as a paper for women only. Loudly it blew its trumpet, and strong were its anticipations of success. Women wanted a daily newspaper for themselves, so it said, and here at last was their chance. Their own paper, largely contributed to by their own talented sex, containing matters purely of social and feminine and yet general interest. It was a pity the journal could not have been entirely conducted by women. Edited, written, printed,

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and published by that wonderful sex! Sad to say, however, man had to have a hand in it; sadder still, women found they didn't want it. They preferred men's newspapers, and cold-shouldered their own, so that it had to fall back on the general public for its circulation, and make "pictorial snap-shot" appeals to halfpenny popularity.

A similar fate has befallen two other journals instituted for women, and to be contributed to almost exclusively by women. Both failed, or had to be resurrected by commonsense and commercial knowledge, and set a-going on new lines with some regard to general utility.

But, of course, these are only rare instances of non-success. Men, too, have had failures and made mistakes. Still, I maintain that men make better journalists than women, and express themselves with better taste. Women are either too diffuse, too personal, or too devoid of humour.

In conclusion I will only observe that woman has a great deal yet to learn before

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she can take the reins of government into her own hands, and of one thing she may be quite sure—she won't learn it from her own sex!

PART II



OBSERVATIONS

THE MISTAKES OF AUTHORS

THE MISTAKES OF CRITICS

THE BOOK WAR

THE CHANGING TASTE IN FICTION

THE STAGE—AS A PROFESSION FOR WOMEN

THE MISTAKES OF AUTHORS

THE other evening, at a charming gathering of artistic souls, the conversation turned upon the various inaccuracies of authors. Serious blemishes have spoilt even notable works worthy of being handed down to posterity. As for modern writers, their offences are legion.

Especially do women err in this respect. Men, as a rule, do give themselves some trouble in verifying facts; but women rush at conclusions, and lose sight of the necessity for research. They are content to paint the emotional side of life, or to deal with erotic and objectionable subjects; and in so painting and so dealing with physiology, they ignore the lessons of science and the merciless laws of nature.

Very few women bring to their art the

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patience, the insight, or the logic of man. To write a book is to them nothing more than the setting aside of a certain number of hours for a given purpose. A passionate egoistic desire to see their efforts in print. For grammatical errors, faulty quotations, and ludicrous misstatements, women's books stand unsurpassed. Noted novelists have produced tedious volumes whose theology is so absolutely absurd that it has called down both ridicule and contempt. There was no reason why they should not have submitted their proof sheets to some authority on the subject, but possibly they were too self-satisfied with their own achievement to desire correction. It is always the fools who rush in where the angels—hesitate!

When women meddle with law, science, astrology, or art, they invariably make mistakes, unless content to consult an authority on the special subject selected for description. I wonder how many have confounded Frankenstein with his monster; have confused Chiron the Centaur with Charon the Ferryman of

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Greek mythology; have supposed Chateaubriand to be a book of culinary secrets; have persisted that "a little *knowledge* is a dangerous thing," is a correct rendering of Pope's immortal phrase "A little *learning*. . . ." Poor Shakespeare has been saddled with many a quotation of which he is guiltless. Ask anyone who wrote "neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red herring," and the Bard of Stratford is authoritatively announced. So also with "the pen is mightier than the sword." Invariably Shakespeare, not Bulwer Lytton, is given as author. "The more the merrier," is another stumbling-block to verification, though that is pardonable seeing it can claim three sources. "Honesty is the best policy" is rarely assigned to Don Quixote, and Ford's oft-quoted "diamonds cut diamonds" is invariably written or spoken as "*diamond cut diamond*." "By hook or crook" is rarely acknowledged as an excerpt from the *Fairie Queene* or a plagiarism in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *Women Pleased*; and "comparisons are odious," from Burton's

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Anatomy of Melancholy, is constantly confused with "comparisons are *odorous*" of Shakespeare in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The latter definition is also frequently ascribed to the famous Mrs. Malaprop.

"All that *glisters* is not gold" claims the Bard of Avon as sponsor, and "All, they say, is not gold, that glitters" comes from Dryden. Rarely are these quotations and the authors given correctly.

Bible quotations are notoriously in error; yet one would fancy there would be little difficulty in verifying them. In describing the marriage service I have noted many an author make the mistake, "Those whom God hath joined," instead of "joined together." These are trifles, of course; but life and art are built up of trifles. It is only their importance to graver issues that invests them with responsibility.

Of course, grammar is too complex and troublesome a thing to trammel the ambitions of authorship. It is only fit to be thrown aside as undesirable luggage. The critic may

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pick it up if he pleases, but the writer foregoes rules and clings to exceptions. Even the "split infinitive" is impervious to criticism though apparently serving as a "red rag to a bull" for the critic. Well-boomed literary lights have fallen to the snare of "different to," and ignored the issue of moods and tenses. How fatally often are past and present tense, first and third person, mixed up indiscriminately. Has an author ever questioned the possibility of his characters acting or speaking, and yet *describing* such action or speech at the same moment?

Such errors as "pachydermatose" for "pachydermatous" — and "*paleothic*" for "paleolithic" have distinguished the pages of more than one popular novelist. But no doubt such trifles are unworthy of the attention of genius—at least such genius as has been defined as "an infinite capacity for taking pains." That writers should pass over mistakes in MSS. is perhaps excusable, but what is wrong with proof corrections when the heroine starts life as a brunette and ends

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as a blonde? When her eyes are blue in one portion of the book and green in another? When the names of characters are changed and not their identities. These are errors by no means rare in books of the present day—books written by authors one would scarcely believe as *blasé* with success!

Again, there are authors who adventure boldly into the regions of art, confident in their own powers of description and regardless of accuracy. A general smattering of terms and phrases is sufficient equipment.

What is inaccurate may pass muster with the general reader, and, fortunately, musicians and painters are not critics. If they chance to come across unprofessional ignorance at least they cannot "slate" it. They may laugh or sneer, but to such indignity the pachydermatous writer is as indifferent as to the canons of art. Law, theology, and medicine are great subjects for fictional errors; and music has come in for specially ridiculous treatment at its hands!

Mistakes as to execution, vocalisation, and

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composition are the rule, not the exception. How often have I read of a violin *solo* as representing all the magic and beauty of a full orchestra; whereas a solo on that instrument is most uninteresting—unless accompanied by piano or orchestra. Bach and Paganini are the only composers who wrote satisfactory solo music for the violin, and the novelist who gushes of sonatas and fantasias played *alone* by a violinist betrays inexcusable ignorance!

Vocal music is also frequently misunderstood. Songs of impossibly high compass are written of as sung by a *contralto*. Tenors are confounded with baritones. In a recent novel I read of a phenomenal personage whose voice ranged "from tenor to bass!" Women's songs are ascribed to male performers, and *vice versa*. Sonata and symphony are also constantly confused; a concerto has been attributed to a band with no solo instruments; an oratorio of Handel's ascribed to Haydn; and the latter composer credited persistently with English nationality owing to a half century of citizenship.

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When an author wishes to particularise the painter's art, the errors are more amusing than important. A studio is a safe subject for description, but it takes a woman's pen to make it picturesquely impossible for work. With the technique of painting she makes pretty play, throwing in "*chiaroscuro*," foreground shading, colour, impression, and the like utilities. Given an easel, palette, and colour-box, what more does the reader need?

With regard to military matters the woman author is always confident and invariably incorrect; of course it is not her fault if "drill" will not take place at the hours she would prefer, or an officer's quarters are not really as luxurious as a duchess's boudoir. Neither is she to blame for the quite inextricable tangle called respectively "corps," regiment, and battalion! And what military rule has any right to interfere with her passion for "promotion," or confute her with such a trifle as barrack-room restrictions when her story demands perfect freedom of action! These are obstacles for which she shows a supreme contempt.

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The main thing is the plot, and the plot has to triumph over any irritating criticism which pretends certain situations and actions are impossible under certain circumstances.

But if military matters require skilful handling what of naval technicalities?

It is an undisputed fact that no woman has written a good sea novel. Possibly there are limits even to her deeds of daring, and the Admiralty and the Merchant Service proclaim one such limit. Of modern naval novels, *Captain Amyas* certainly stands as pioneer; but one can only hope he is not intended to be representative. It is hard to be deprived, in fiction, of our breezy, bold, true-hearted sailor. Even if he is a mistake he is a very delightful and pardonable one.

There is yet another test of literary skill which calls for remark. It is the ability to make one's characters live up to their portraiture. Not become mere pegs on which to hang the author's own opinions, and through whose mouths to air the author's personal grievances.

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This is a peculiarly feminine pitfall, and one very difficult to avoid.

The chief test of literary merit in fiction, is the art of characterisation. It was an art in which Dickens reigned supreme. He could not touch the most insignificant personality of his crowded canvas, but he invested it immediately with life and meaning; you *knew* the person; you saw him, or her, and you recognised the importance of an introduction.

In how many modern books do we find this art? There is plenty of description, of action, of introspection, but very, very rarely is there an interest that grips the mind and holds the reader. An excellent satire on modern fiction is that expressed by a lady who said, "It was so easily forgotten!"

No doubt she was right. The modern author only cares to amuse, or astonish, or shock the public into temporary attention. Success is only a matter of future increased royalties and lavish advertisement. Whether the work will live, will be valued or remembered, the modern writer cares nothing. Fame is of

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no account beside contemporary notoriety; beside "big sales," and "booms," and other great and wonderful signs of popularity—however deserved, or however gained.

No wonder we forget the books that pour out in a countless stream from the publishers to the libraries, from the libraries to the public. Rarely does one claim attention or inspire interest. The only test of the worth of a book is "how many times it will bear reading."

Few modern contributions to literature will stand *that* test.

To return to the subject of "character drawing." How faulty are men's attempts to draw women, and what poor sawdust dolls most women present as man! They paint him as a type of the physical perfections they admire, and the virtues they would like him to possess; or else they condemn him utterly for sake of one unpardoned offender known to themselves, and therefore made the scapegoat of his sex.

The "girl" and the middle-aged spinster are alike incapable of mental insight into the

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psychological complexities of man. Their experience is limited by powers of limited observation. They can but draw on their own fancy, or their married friends' garbled confidences. Morality forbids truth and imagination outstrips it. Therefore women's heroes are rarely satisfactory.

And what of man's heroines?

Are they epitomes of virtue, or possessed of those endearing human frailties which make the sex at once so complex and so charming? Are his portraits of woman more correct than her's of man?

To his credit be it said that they are infinitely more lovable and more enduring types, taken *as types*. That he is considerate and dissimulating. That for one Becky Sharp we have a hundred "Doras." Of course neither stand for the real woman as the real woman knows herself. But both are pardonable mistakes owing to the touch of humanity that has made them living memories.

Sex has a curious duality. In the best man there is a touch of womanliness. In the

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best woman a hint of man. It is the effort to suppress these seeming contradictions that spoils character delineation, or denies it due prominence as prototype of life.

There is a wide arena for fictional exploration in the fields of romance. Yet it is one reluctantly approached by women authors. Here, discrepancies and inaccuracies are of small account. The reader only desires to revel in adventure, and enjoy idyllic passions suitable to green fields, to castled splendours, to pageantry, and glory, and heroism.

That no sane mortal ever did such deeds, achieved such fame, or wooed such damsels matters nothing. Neither is it of any consequence that the mind of youth may feast upon such impossible dainties to its own hurt, may go forth to face the world believing that such knighthood and devotion still exist, and that a ball-room proposal will be worded as the hero of fiction words his love story, and paints his ardour and devotion.

The mistakes of the romance-writer are far-reaching, but also they are divinely excusa-

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able. They lift the soul above sordid and worldly considerations. Above duty and obedience, and the eligible suitor. Even above Waring decorations, and the furnishing of flats!

Women are not nearly so good at romantic fiction as men. What woman has ever written such delicious nonsense as *The Prisoner of Zenda*, or enchanted weary hours with such stories as *She*, or the *Forest Lovers*, or *The Seven Springs*.

With all her attributed gifts of poetry and romance she is far behind man in the technique of the romantic school. Dare one suggest that the sterner sex is after all the softer-hearted?

One more item stands in the catalogue of authors' mistakes, and it is a very irritating and a very common one. I allude to the *naming* of characters in similar fashion. How can a reader help confusing the personalities of "Chloe and Chloris," Marian and Mary-Ann, Maud and Mabel, Ann and Anna, Bessie and Betty, Rolf and Rudolf, Godfrey and Geoffrey, and so on. Surely writers

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might try to find names for their principal characters that do *not* all begin with the same capital letter, and that are *not* an unsuitable label as they journey through their pages.

For a name is of great importance to the reader. Some are so ugly that they are a positive offence, and destroy all interest in the individual they present. Others suit as exactly as a melody fits a rhyme. With thousands of charming and original sponsors at hand there is no reason for an author to cling to ugly and commonplace designations. In like manner, why are their titles so often utterly misleading? Surely a title should represent something of what a book contains. It is an artistic fraud to make the label say one thing and the book another. To set the reader groping helplessly through three to four hundred pages of close print, in order to discover that title and story have nothing in common!

These are a few of the mistakes in fiction which delight critics and annoy the reader.

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It may be that a new race of authors will adorn the new century and present the world with a literature at once interesting and accurate. A literature from which woman's curious ignorance of man will be expunged, and man's better knowledge of woman will be less obtrusive.

It is quite time he should retaliate on the lines of Balzac and Meredith and Flaubert. Hitherto he has been rather more merciful to fictional woman than she has been to fictional man. Perhaps he knows instinctively that if he told her the truth about herself she would banish him for ever by a parody of Othello—
“Never more be mate of mine!”

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IF an author is but mortal and prone to err, what of the critic who passes those errors under the lens of a merciless judgment, and forbids him a court of appeal?

This is a subject to be approached with due reverence. Though an author can and may make mistakes, the critic is above such weakness. At the worst, he only misunderstands the author's meaning, and that is entirely the author's fault.

There is something at once sublime and soul-inspiring in the exalted position of the critic. It shows him wrapped in clouds of anonymity, sitting afar off, and conferring honour or ignominy on less important mortals.

Yet what is the *real* value of literary criticism? Does it benefit the author, or the book, or the journal in which it appears?

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Is it meant to serve any direct purpose, or is it simply the reflex of a special personal opinion?

In the latter instance it is comparatively useless. An author writes for a large and mixed public; for a combination of tastes, not for one special palate. Otherwise authorship would cease to be a profession, and publishers might shut up their shops.

SOME QUALIFICATIONS

One of the first qualifications of criticism is an unprejudiced mind. Smaller matters such as "literary judgment," "erudition," "justice," "patronage," and the like, will doubtless follow in due course. Also a critic might occasionally remember that he is reviewing a book the author has written—not a book *he* would have liked the author to write. This seems to be a matter of difficulty.

Having happily mastered this difficulty, it might also be as well to remember that "giving away the plot" is not always a kindness to the author; neither is it advisable

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to quote detached sentences. They have an awkward knack of irrelevance. A house apart from its front door or its principal window has an unfinished look about it.

There is a method of injury quite as subtle as praise; and a method of praise quite as humiliating as censure. The kindness of intention falls often short of its intent, and many an author writhes in secret over palpable, though well-intentioned, misjudgment. Gushing criticisms are as fatal to a book as publishers' puffs. One suspects a motive in either case. For my part, whenever I have ordered a book from the library on the *strength* of a laudation from various critical journals, I have invariably been disappointed with it. I can scarcely recall an instance of a satisfactory book from the point of view of the gushing critic.

INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS

But the main question is what criticism really does, either for author, or publisher, or the formation of public taste in literature?

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Anyone who has been "behind the scenes" of journalistic life knows that the mainstay of a newspaper or a magazine is its advertisement columns. An editor who receives a large and certain income from a firm of publishers takes good care that the books issued by that firm are tenderly handled by his reviewing staff. Criticism in a literary sense is rendered impossible, and the public and the author both suffer—the one because it buys trash, and the other because encouraged to write it.

SOME EMINENT "AUTHORITIES"

Of course everyone knows that there are special journals which claim to criticise books with judicial and impartial severity—notably the *Athenæum*, the *Saturday Review*, and *The Times* (before the Book War lowered its prestige).

These august authorities scorn to praise. Their one object is to find out or invent every possible defect that shall damn the work and make the sensitive soul of its writer writhe

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in agony. It matters not if the book be well or ill written; if it has humour or lacks it; style or grace of promise, plot that excites, or character that charms. The one essential thing is to discover faults—not to praise merits.

If the merit chances to be too conspicuous to carp at, then the critic finds fault with style or construction. He opines that the humour is forced, the sentiment false, and the characters untrue to life. He will magnify a palpable printer's error into a glaring grammatical fault. He will rage and gnash his teeth at the introduction of foreign phrases; of idioms that won't bear the test of Ollendorf or Hall's French course, though the writer may have lived in the country and picked up colloquialisms suited to the fictitious speakers—if not correct to rule and measure of the written language. Does the author perchance plan scene and action in a country unvisited by, or district unknown to the critic—straightway is he met by a storm of encyclopædic information, or advised to turn his attention to places nearer

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home and with which the public are better acquainted.

Critics may be divided into two classes. One is too easily pleased; the other is never pleased at all. The one must growl and carp and pick holes in his materials; the other finds them so delightful that his commendation is almost reckless. Both do harm to the author. Both are valueless as *criticism*, which word implies the "art of judging," and advocates an impartial investigation into what is submitted; a calm consideration of merits even if the subject-matter or style be not to the exact taste of the judge himself.

Yet, taken as a whole, what use is criticism? The best notices won't force the sale of a book if it is not to the popular taste; the worst or most virulent will not prevent the public from getting the book if they intend to do so.

To be of real value, criticism should surely possess a form of unanimity. Should play the part of literary sponsor to the work in question, and present that work to such misguided persons as read criticisms, with

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certain specified qualifications about which all the staff of reviewers are agreed.

Instead of this, modern criticism is a mass of contradictions. One reviewer states one thing, another reverses the statement. The book is bad and worthless; it is also "able," "excellent," and bound to assure the authors' reputation. It is "full of glaring errors," and "conspicuous for originality of style." The writer is encouraged, on the one side, to "go on with a career for which he is admirably fitted," and told, on the other, that he should "never attempt to write another book." Now, surely it is impossible for the same work to be at once "weak and trashy" and "powerful and virile"; to lack everything that can be termed literary merit, and possess everything to ensure success and popular favour? Yet it is a common occurrence to read opinions of this sort on the same book.

JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE

If a critic feels he can score a point against an author, he is quite justified in doing so;

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but equally is he justified in pointing out the good things as well as the bad. Judgment means also justice. Hundreds of notices that appear on books are not deserving of a moment's consideration. They lack every essential of criticism; they insult every canon of art. They are simply ignorant and contemptible; and the best plan is for the author to make a note of the journals in which they have appeared and advise his publisher to send no more of his books to such journals in the future.

A great many writers would never dream of sending their works for review at all if the publishers did not insist upon it. Does it not stand to reason that an author is quite aware of his own merits, as of his own limitations? Never yet was the book written that seemed as perfect in accomplishment as it promised in inspiration. Never will such a book be written by any possessor of genius. For genius means that sublime discontent with achievement which praise cannot satisfy, nor blame discourage.

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THE CRITIC AN INTRUDER

Small minds with a large percentage of self-esteem are easily satisfied. To them the praise of a reviewer means absolute bliss ; but when an author possesses a temperament—that cultured, epicurean thing so hard to define—he cannot accept praise as satisfaction or blame as a deserved affront. To him a critic is but an intruder on sacred ground, with an encyclopædia at his back and a host of well-worn platitudes at the service of brain and pen !

In saying that critics as a race are more dissatisfied than appreciative, I must except a class that usually shows itself as too well and too easily satisfied.

It is that of the Discoverer. The critic who has " found " a genius. Some embryo Thackeray, some minor poet, some budding Paganini in the realms of art, some incarnated Mozart in point of technical execution. Self-assertive, popular talent this class of critic

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storns to acknowledge; but on the "hidden gem" of his own discovery he will lavish any amount of enthusiasm. As a rule the musical or the dramatic critic is far more enthusiastic than his literary brother. Possibly the realms of Art are more entertaining than the paths of Literature, and even ignorance or non-proficiency need not hinder him from playing Bernard Shaw to a benighted public!

To such minds the public is but a dull and stupid ass that requires to be told what sort of oats it should eat, and in what pastures it may disport itself. A something on which the young reviewer may expend his own sense of humour unchecked. Yet so rare and precious a gift is humour that it might often be mistaken for flippancy,—were flippancy allowable to so important an institution as that of criticism. On no subject is this "humour" so brilliantly expended as on what are called "printers' errors" by the author, and serious faults and misquotations by the reviewer.

Perhaps the reviewer is ignorant that only

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a certain amount of "proof corrections" are allowable to a page. To exceed is to incur an extra charge for each additional correction, and, unhappily, not every author is rich enough to permit himself such a luxury out of his royalties!

The power of a critic is one of those little accidents which afford temporary majesty to uncrowned heads. In his office and at his office he is of supreme importance. The world of art, like the world of humanity, is governed not by the class that ennobles but the class that tyrannises over it. And of all tyrants who shall compare with the one dressed in "a little brief authority"? Whether he belongs to powers spiritual or temporal, it is alike hard for him to preserve a due sense of humility under the reward of the Order of Merit.

For, naturally, merit alone is responsible for election to an office so important and so arduous.

Arduous indeed must be the work of selection, and the amount of reading necessi-

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tated by the abnormal multiplication of published books. The fault here lies with the publishers, who "rush out" their 6s. volumes in such rapid succession at two seasons of the year, and with the editors of journals who "order" criticism as a sort of cheap sale article to be supplied by the gross. Instructions often accompany a cartload of volumes: "So-and-so's best book has a big boom. Review on same lines."

"This firm advertises largely with us; *praise generally.*" "B. & Co. say this is over subscribed, day of publication. Say it will be the talk of all London before long." And so on. The new author, or the author who is slowly coming to the front, are left severely alone. Their reviewing falls to the slack season. It is no uncommon thing for a book to pass into two or three editions, and be reviewed *months* afterwards as in its first!

But of all the unwise and unkind things done by critics, the worst is their knack of telling the author's story in their own fashion (it is never *his*), and printing special passages

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of descriptions apart from the text. It is a species of "sampling" that does no one any credit, and often prejudices the mind of the reader of reviews.

Taken all in all, criticism is a cheap and fatal honour which too often enthrones mediocrity and abases greatness. It is unlike "mercy" in that its quality is "strained," and it neither blesses him who gives nor him who receives! The latter would often prefer to do without it altogether, and it is a moot question with authors whether reviews, good or bad, have any important effect on their sales. The public seldom read criticisms unless appended to an advertisement, or printed on the fly-leaf of a book. If they like one book of any special author, they will certainly order another, regardless of what critics say in its disfavour or its praise. Many a writer has to thank a reviewer's mistaken estimate of his work for its success with the public. More books are read because people are warned not to read them, than because they possess

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literary merit. The public is like a perverse child. To be forbidden anything is to desire it; and a bookstall "boycotting" is a sure advertisement of success. Curiosity is aroused, and must be satisfied at any cost. In the difference of critical opinion lies the author's safety.

Indeed it is fortunate for authors that critics, like physicians, do differ. There is a chance of existence for the book, as for the patient. But lest the fortunate writer take himself too seriously, friends are often more mindful of a bad notice than a good one. They rarely omit to remind him what Courtney of the *Daily Telegraph*, or Robertson Nicoll of the *British Weekly* has said of his book. And if he smilingly alludes to the *Spectator* or the *Pall Mall*, they never happen to have seen them on that special date!

If an author possesses the saving grace of humour let him retaliate on his critics. If he does *not*, he had better let them go on making mistakes to the end of time! No editor will permit a mere author to

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correct them, and the reading public care little and know less of what constitutes literature.

It has certainly nothing to do with big sales, or up-to-date advertising, or even critical errors !

SOME WORDS ON THE BOOK WAR

(From the Author's point of view.)

AFTER dealing with the mistakes of authors and critics, it is refreshing to turn to the mistakes of trade—that useful institution without whose aid the author would be unknown, and the critic have no existence.

Literature—like everything else in this money-grabbing, money-getting age—has become a mere marketable article. Something to barter, chaffer over, and “do a deal” with. The said “deal” having apparently no connection with brains; merely with utility.

In the late battle between *The Times Book Club* and the publishers, the unfortunate author's position seemed to have been for-

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gotten. Through the whole conflict he was scarcely alluded to, and his feeble protests were drowned by the vociferous clamour of the two contesting parties.

Now I maintain that if there was one person more deserving of attention than another in the matter that person was certainly the writer of books. The originator of a Supply, and the cause of a Demand.

Why should the author be pushed aside, and have his price arranged for him independent of his own wishes and apart from his hard-earned popularity?

It is all very well for Book Trusts and ignorant M.P.'s to declare the public should have its literature cheapened, but what of lowered rates of payment, and declining royalties for the brain-worker whose livelihood depends on his income? This seemed to be the point of least interest in the whole question. Books were treated on the same lines as cheap drapery and "store goods," and literature openly insulted by the booksters of trade.

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For all this "pothar" we are again indebted to America. To that abominable "given-away-with-a-pound-of-tea" system for which that enlightened country is famous; a system which is vulgarising England, as it has already vulgarised the States; a system as odious as the manners and language of New York and its kindred cities.

To go back to the beginning of the whole matter. I maintain that it was nothing short of a national disgrace when *The Times*, our old established, national journal was allowed to pass into the hands of an American Syndicate. A set of men to whom money and money's worth is the only consideration in life, and who would stop at little or nothing to gain their ends. It is all very well to deny that *The Times* has changed hands, to say it is *not* under American management. If such were the case why did its owners permit the "Encyclopædia trick"? Why associate their paper with a lending library and second-hand book-shop? Why rage and fume when the publishers refused to

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advertise for the benefit of the said Club? Why allow the newspaper and the subscription to the Club to amalgamate in so close a fashion? Why lend the name and associations of a journal that once stood for national integrity to such a mean and petifogging trick as that displayed by the boycotting of authors and publishers who refused their sanction to American methods?

England has assuredly not gained much by the introduction of American trade; for to the unscrupulous trader every "dodge" and artifice that cloak dishonesty is only "'cuteness." The "'cuteness" that invented "wooden nutmegs" and impossible food-stuffs, and sent its tinned and canned abominations wholesale into our midst.

It was bad enough to see our shops filled with these horrors, but Yankee ambition was not going to stop short at the door of trade. It looked further afield, and beheld the financial weakness of dramatic art.

How has it happened that theatre after

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theatre has passed into American hands? That an English audience has to submit to having its plays and its actors and actresses "presented" to it by American permission? Only because national pride has sunk into the apathy of indifference, and cares nothing for its own degradation.

It will be the same with literature unless the authors "stand to their guns."

The Americans have made the discovery that the English public want cheap literature. It is not unlikely that the public also want cheap bread. But what of the bakers and the farmers who have to be reckoned with? Are wheat and flour, and labour of making and distribution, to be thrust aside as not worth considering, so that the public is pleased?

Yet such are the methods of a Trust, and such are the kind of humiliations the Book Syndicate would thrust upon the author. His value is nil in comparison with their schemes. But let the Trust first pay him his accustomed price for the goods he brings to its market, and then they may sell his wares

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at the rates they consider best serve their own interests.

The essence of those interests, and of the whole scheme, is the gradual destruction of the bookseller.

The autocratic decree will go forth that in no instance shall the said bookseller sell at a cheaper rate than *The Times Book Club* and that the said Club may "boycott" any author who objects to its principles, and interferes with its system!

The way in which the leading lights of this Book Club have contradicted statements and invented theories has made excellent reading during the controversy. Yet no one can say that the Club has justified its existence or its future projects, except those subscribers who gloat over anything on the "given-away-with" methods; who would buy anything or subscribe to anything if only something "extra" was thrown in with the purchase.

It is a system that has proved of immense popularity to the grocers and drapers of the United Kingdom. It is a system eagerly

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"pounced upon" by the 'cute Yankee, and is only misleading to those not keen enough to see through a 'veil of pretence as filmy disguise for self-interest.

But behind it all lurks a scheme derogatory to self-respect and integrity. Behind it all sits the smiling tyrant waiting for the opportune moment. Behind it all stand the humiliated genius of literature, and the dictatorial magnate who declares, "You shall read what *I* choose, and buy at what price *I* name; and you shall recognise in me only a glorious benefactor who hails from a land where the cant of monopoly is the sole religion of trade!"

This is what *The Times* Book Trust will mean if it is permitted to go on with its enterprise,—an enterprise centred solely in the gulling of the British public, and the exploiting of a base and ill-meaning system with which clean English hands should have nothing to do!

Cheap literature! Listen to the parrot cry and take it for its worth.

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Cheap books and standard editions are to be found in every book-shop and on every book-stall. There is no need to further humiliate the profession of letters; to cheapen its wares in a paltry market—a market utterly unworthy of them, and of the long and patient effort to keep English literature up to a high standard of excellence!

That an American Syndicate, disguised as an English one, should dare dictate terms to our authors and publishers on the pretext of "serving the public" is an insult almost incredible! One wonders it has not aroused the wrath and indignation of the whole country. But, indeed, Englishmen are fast lapsing into chill indifference to all matters not specially connected with commercial advantage. The Book War has not, as yet, touched their pockets, only their honour, and therefore it may fight itself out!

The publishers, *The Times*, and the "poor devil of an author" have to settle the dispute between themselves, and unless the affair

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degenerates into a scandal such as the Oil, or Meat, or Soap Trusts of recent fame, neither politician nor public will interfere with it!

The subterfuge and contradictions of the proprietors of the "Book Club" might surely have shaken public faith in their protestations. Their appeal has been made in typical American fashion, ending always with that "Send in your orders at once! Delay is death, and Postponement the burial service," which is the distinguishing trait of American advertising. A method which, I regret to see, is being largely adopted by the *Daily Mail* for its "Harmless worth specialties."

But to return once more to the specific grievance in this matter.

Are authors to be brow-beaten by the upstart institution? Are gifted men and women to be hampered by the restrictions of trade? Are English writers going to accept American dictation on the subject of the work and its worth? Has America shown itself so excellent a literary judge, and so honest in its dealings with British authors, that

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they should bow to its dictates and accept its opinions as to their "market value"?

Has not the whole business of *The Times* control been a shabby bartering of "old lamps for new"? A secret and underhand system of working on the good faith of the public, and bribing its custom by pretended generosity! Surely in this humiliating war of brains against "boycott" the authors should stand side by side in their own interests, as the publishers are doing, as the American Syndicate is doing, and as the public will never do—because the public doesn't question the real meaning of the matter. They allow themselves to be deafened by the "big-drum" beating of American methods, and bribed by the "given-away-with-a-pound-of-tea" system of which I have before spoken?

Mr. Henniker Heaton's plea that he and his parliamentary friends are only desirous of giving the public its literature at a reasonable price is a very one-sided argument. The reading public—the public that buys books because it loves them—is amply catered for by

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the flood of cheap editions placed on the market within six to twelve months of publication. The public that buys "cheap books" is not the public of *The Times*. Its subscribers belong to a class who can well afford 4s. 6d. for a book they like and desire. The expensive "net" priced books of Travel, Biography, and Science, most certainly lay claim to their advertised value. They represent years of toil and research; and the author, like the labourer, is surely worthy of his hire.

With regard to fiction, both publishers and syndicates know that an author has first to make a name, and then to sustain its reputation. This can only be done by hard work and good work.

It is almost criminal to cheapen labour in its proper market; and certainly to cheapen literature is humiliating to its creators, though Mr. Hall Caine appears to be of a different opinion. Yet his ridiculous experiment has proved anything but successful! Even if it had been a fair test, counted as a book on the same ground that *The Christian*

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and *The Manxman* are books, it would have been no criterion as to the value of other authors' works. For Hall Caine has two markets in which to sell his wares, and cannot be placed on a level with the struggling writer, or the author of moderate sales, to whom a 6s. book may mean a considerable income, and a 2s. 6d. one just half, or even less, of that income!

The same amount of time, and the same excellence of work, will be exacted for the cheap book as for the higher priced and higher paid one. Where comes in, then, the justice of an arrangement that is proposed from no philanthropic motives, but is merely the sordid outcome of trade monopoly and American "cuteness"?

The American publisher has distinguished himself by long years of piracy. Has refused to participate in an equitable and honourable copyright law. Has over and over again shown himself possessed of no literary discrimination whatever; and now, with commendable effrontery, he seeks to ruin the

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English bookseller and "boycott" the English publisher who has the temerity to object to his system.

There are very few really good American authors. The book market and "bargain counters" of New York are flooded with trash—beneath contempt from a literary standard! But surely the English author is not going to place his wares on the same market, and be judged by the discreditable standard of Boom and Brag and Boast!

It was the enlightened American who invented that elegant expression "to hog," and applied it *practically* to all matters coming under the denomination of a Trust. Almost all the big theatres in the States are "hogged" by a Theatrical Trust. The translation of this delightful verb is to "acquire greedily," and in such acquisition, at once unscrupulous and unfair, lies the secret of millionairism! But happily England is not yet keen on "hogging," and has still a prejudice in favour of fair play. Surely it does not wish its

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literature to become an American Trust and be "hogged," as its drama has been, and continues to be! For such is the scheme in view, and it is one for which Hooper & Co. are ruthlessly working.

They profess a profound belief in the gullibility of the British public. • Perhaps they have reason. Has not that public given them an open market for their atrocious "food-stuffs," their wholesale rubbish called "Patent medicines," their hideous flat-soled shoes and impossible boots? Their "greased lightning" restaurants, their vulgar musical comedies, their idiotic "cake walks and coon songs," their ineffable "surprise entertainments," and all the other atrocities launched upon long-suffering Britain by American audacity? It was only natural they should think that journalism and literature might also fall to their lure. Let us hope that for once the "'cute" Yankee has reckoned without his host. That he will find himself rebuffed and refused admittance into one at least of our professions and trades.

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"Exorbitant prices" is a favourite expression of this precious Book Club. It sounds well in its manifestoes, and has the effect of "throwing dust in the eyes" of those to whom its effusions are sent. But is it not a little odd that the owners of the *most expensive daily paper* in the United Kingdom should be so fond of such an expression?

After all, the reading public gain no advantage by subscribing to *The Times* under present conditions. Clubs and societies and hotels may find it cheaper to get a number of books as well as having the inevitable *Times* thrown in, but people who like the ordinary daily papers derive no benefit. Smith or Wyman, or Mudie's or Boots offer them a more reasonable library subscription, and their own choice of the Daily Press! *The Times* does not appeal to the general public any longer. Its circulation has decreased enormously, and it was in order to improve that circulation that the Book Club (and its attendant methods of "hogging") was first started, and set a-going by a Transatlantic Syndicate.

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First came the much-loved dodge of a "bait" to subscribers. The bait was the well-known, and now equally well-abused, 9th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. This was reintroduced and republished by the familiar tricks I have already described. Many a household and householder is the sadder and sorrier to-day for a too hasty swallowing of that bait! Gladly would he return his load of bulky out-of-date inaccuracies for half the price he paid, and the *Daily Mail* on his breakfast-table!

This artful scheme was followed by the opening of the huge "second-hand" book store in Oxford Street. It was stocked like a huge Jumble Sale, mostly with the "remainders" obtained from unsuspecting publishers. It offered these to the public with a huge flourish of trumpets and a blaring persistence of generosity!

The public loves sales and bargains. Its curiosity was aroused. It came to see, and was induced to stay. It was assured that The Times Book Club was a self-denying

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martyr, seeking only the interests of the British reading public, and it believed that assurance. But the publishers began to grow uneasy. They had a memory of "contracts"; of persuasive interviewers who had only hinted at a scheme for "joint" benefit! As time went on the uneasiness increased. From their allies, the booksellers, came loud and indignant remonstrance. For the "Club" was waxing bolder in its methods, and eventually showed its hand and "gave away" (this time without the pound of tea) its motives.

Briefly, *The Times* Book Club has American dollars to back it, American enterprise to "hog" it, and American impudence to carry it over the stormy waters of controversy.

But is it going to have its own way? Is it going to browbeat author and publisher and bookseller alike, and finally become a huge, devouring, unprincipled monopoly, as all great Trusts do eventually become?

The answer lies in the future, and in the power of those who contribute to literature and support it.

THE CHANGING TASTE IN FICTION

MEN and women have been writing fiction for long and long enough. Writing for a livelihood ; for an income worthy of the Tax ; for sake and hope of fame, for sheer love of the art. Some of their work lives on and is beloved of all, and some has long been forgotten. Some, too, is dubbed " old-fashioned " and wearisome, because the closely covered pages demand time, and attention, and in these modern days people have neither time to spare, nor attention to bestow. For the taste in fiction has changed surprisingly, and though the old names live on and find a place on book-shelves or in palatial libraries, the books themselves are rarely opened. Dummies with fine bindings and gold lettering would serve their purpose just as well.

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In my present memory the change in popular taste seems increasingly fickle and short-lived. What modern "sensational novel *lives*, or could create the sensation of *The Woman in White*? Where shall we find again such a master of plot and mystery as Wilkie Collins?

Miss Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* was another striking example of the sensational school,—a school which she seemed able to supply 'exhaustlessly' year after year. Her work was simply marvellous as an output of literary energy and of the "engrossing" story. The story in which, as with Wilkie Collins, the plot was everything.

The calm and steady powers of George Eliot balanced these two, but she wrote slowly and at long intervals. Florence Marryat claimed popularity for a long time, but who reads her now? Many of her contemporaries had a considerable reputation in those days of the "three-volume"; the 31s. 6d. book, which alluring sum never meant even half of what it represented *figuratively*. Then came a radical change.

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Popular taste demanded a condensed and modified form of reading, and the 1s. book entered upon the scene. Its advent was heralded by *Called Back* and *Jekyll and Hyde*. Innumerable were its publishers and its advocates. But the unfortunate writers realised that *this* craze meant almost ruin for themselves. The quantity of work was still the same, the quality had to be sensational, startling, extraordinary; and the profits, alas! were not for the writers. Yet the unfortunate beings answered to the demand; toiled and travailed, and worked from dawn till eve for a livelihood, writing on and on in hopes of attracting attention; of making a "big hit" some day.

At last the Shilling Shocker died a natural death. But it had killed out the old three-volume novel, and the leading publishers decided that they would issue fiction in the form of the 6s. book as it stands at the present time. It meant a serious loss to authors unless they had "sell-
ing names." It also brought innumerable

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new writers into the field, and heralded a new school of literature. Public taste, wearied and sickened of perpetual high-seasoned fiction, turned to the mystic and semi-religious order for gratification. The priests and prophets of this school had a notably good time. Religion was a splendid bait, because it caught all sorts of fish. People who had looked upon "novel reading" as a sin, and confined their literary efforts to the perusal of tracts, or the *Quiver*, or *Sunday at Home*, now discovered that a "good" novel was quite as allowable as the Bible. By *good* they meant its faculty of representing religious difficulties in the methods of Edna Lyall and Mrs. Humphry Ward. All sects and denominations read these novels, and read them with a consciousness of excellent motive in such perusal. They paved the way for a further audacity in literary venture, and heralded a high priestess of occult and semi-hysterical fiction with whose exalted motives and models no mere critic dared intermeddle! Walter Besant, Baring Gould, and Hardy

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had their hour and day of popularity. So had the "Kail Yârd," and that school of brilliant young geniuses of whom Anthony Hope, Robert Hichens, and E. F. Benson are still the exponents. . .

Then started forward a new school of writers, who founded and "found" themselves; paving the road of daring by venturesome efforts at expounding the mysteries of sexual morality. Close on their heels came the feminine followers of this same cult. The writer of the introspective novel, the sex-problem novel, the psychological novel. The wails and martyrdom of the Eternal Feminine now had their day, and were eagerly devoured and discussed. From the woman who "Did—and Didn't," who "Would and Wouldn't," who "Could and Couldn't," popular taste again turned to the Society novel. This promised a happy combination of the sensational and the improper. It was delivered in all sorts and conditions of literary style. It bore the stamp of religion and mysticism; of sex frailty, and of strange cults; of odious vices and

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habits. It dealt with monsters and monstrosities; with unyeiled virtue and exquisitely garbed vice. It was a sauce *piquante* for jaded palates, and an appeal to the prurient curiosity of less exacting epicures. Women read such literature only as a—warning. Clergymen read it in order to find a text for sermons on social depravity. Men of all sorts and professions read it from the sheer necessity of being “up to date” in Club rooms, and at public discussions! The middle classes read it as a desirable addition to preconceived ideas of the “Upper Ten,” and the Free Libraries furnished it as a grudging concession to an imperative demand.

The manner in which public taste has deserted one standard for another is very curious. Neither does it say much for culture, or literary acumen. A modern novel rarely ranks as a piece of literary art; as something to value, to preserve, to hand down to posterity, or to keep on one's own bookshelf and read again and yet again. It is a wide jump from George Eliot to Ouida; from Ouida to Marie.

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Corelli; from Thackeray to Hall Caine; from Meredith to Guy Boothby. Who could read Rhoda Broughton or Mrs. Hungerford now without a sort of contempt for their silly heroines? Without wonderment at the author's want of style and faulty grammar and perpetual use of the present tense; in itself a serious literary error. Yet the former was once acclaimed one of the queens of fiction, as was also her "second in command"—Helen Mathers.

The present day is specially remarkable for the "high jump" or "sudden leap" type of popularity. A name hitherto unheard of suddenly springs into prominence and favour. A new writer with something original to say, and *able* to say it with originality, is almost certain of success. The success may be that of only a single book (of which there are notable instances), or it may continue and reach a high-water mark of popularity. That, again, depends on the fickle and unstable taste of the public, which rejects as imperiously as it demands.

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Such, briefly, is the present state of modern fiction. We live at too high pressure to be able to give time or thought to what we read. It must be amusing, daring, provocative. No one (save critics) asks for skill, or art, or literary merit. Slipshod methods do just as well, provided the *subject* is sufficiently notorious or extraordinary, or has some trick of catching immediate attention. The ranks of literature are over-crowded, and the literature itself suffers accordingly.

All the "big selling names" have to resort to American methods of advertising; to publishers' "puffs" and the beating of their own big drums in order to warn a fickle public that it is expected to read their productions! The smaller fry, the "old" names, have to content themselves with a few hundreds advance on royalties, and to supplement their income by writing trashy and sensational serials,—a class of fiction that has apparently another sort of public. One that *pays*.

THE STAGE—AS A PROFESSION FOR WOMEN

UNDOUBTEDLY the best profession for woman is her own. To be a woman means so much ; to be anything else—so little more !

She comes into life handicapped by many physical disadvantages. It would seem, indeed, as if Nature had intended her for but one use—the domestic, or procreative, as set forth in the marriage service. Life, however, in its civilised and advanced forms, has pushed her forward into the rank of workers, and, with that instinctive courage for which her sex is famed, she has set herself to earn her bread by the use of any natural or acquired talent she possesses.

Time has proved that woman's power is sufficient to throw open the jealously-guarded gates of science and art, and gain admission

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into those, high realms. But what genius first claims and gains, mediocrity is sure to attempt. And mediocrity by force of numbers has become an aggressive, noisy, and unfeminine influence. It has pushed its way everywhere, declaring boldly that what man has done women can do also. Before her lies the realms he has conquered, the prizes he has won. She stretches eager energies for conquest, eager hands for the awards. Every avenue to art and labour is overcrowded, for the simple reason that both sexes work where formerly one alone laboured, and the other at rare intervals, and by rarer right of genius—achieved.

In the present era everyone wants to achieve without staying to question requisite abilities.

Life has become an indiscriminate rush. What "someone has done, anybody else can do" is a very usual argument. That the "someone" may be unusually gifted, the "anybody else" incompetent, does not apparently concern the plea or the pleader. So literature, music, painting, and the stage have thousands

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of students and followers where once they only counted scores, and the extra numerals represent—Woman.

But perhaps of all vocations that lend themselves as special attractions to women, none can compete with the stage. Its fascination is irresistible. From time immemorial the "play-actress" has been a power—a danger, and a sovereign in her own right. If she possessed beauty, what better arena in which to display it? If gifted with genius, what better field for its exercise and her own triumphs could be desired? And those triumphs were not short-lived. They lasted with her life, and gained fresh tributes from Time. Other women fade and pale and fall out of the ranks of memory, but the actress whom Fame has crowned never loses her charm, never sinks into forgetfulness, never loses her hold on the public who worship her. This is another source of stage fascination. It holds a woman beautiful and young long after beauty and youth have fled. The garish day, the social rivalry, the harsh

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criticism of either sex, the dawn of new favourites, which test the enduring powers of the woman of fashion, have no terrors for the queen of the stage. Her empire is safe, and widespread. Every aid of art and costume are hers by which to enhance physical charms, or conceal personal defects. It is this extraordinary fascination of the stage that has led so many women to believe in its magical powers. They fail to discover the dividing-line between mere talent and that one unteachable thing—genius. The head anointed with *that* sacred oil can alone and unaided lift itself above the level of all compeers, fling defiance at traditions of art, and conquer by its own supreme right of perfection.

But how rare it is! How seldom found!

Ignorance, vanity, greed, conceit, ambition, these send their hundreds and their thousands into the ranks of mediocrity, throng the agents' offices, besiege the stage door, plunge imperious fingers into the pockets of aristocratic fools, rule the stage of burlesque, comic opera, and melodrama, and are a haunting horror in

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the provinces, and a social blot on the capitals of the world. •

For, deny it who may, there is a coarsening influence around and about and within all things theatrical. • •

The girl who has run the gamut of Agents' Offices, mixed with the throng who crowd to answer advertisements, toured with bogus managements in the provinces, tramped the midnight streets, shared public dressing-rooms, listened to the chaff and jests and familiarities of actors and managers—such a girl must insensibly deteriorate. Her sensibilities become blunted, her moral deductions less keen, her mind familiarised with many evil and harmful things. Of course to know evil is not necessarily to follow it, but to grow accustomed to seeing others follow it is a danger. Morality may be a virtue of temperament, or of teaching; something to guard, or something to ignore; but to live where it is laughed at or deemed impossible, is gradually to believe in its impossibility. The light-hearted unions, the short-lived partnerships of theatrical couples,

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are treated as quite a common result of the intimacies of stage life. No one is surprised at their existence, or their conclusions. But such things are more or less of a shock at first to a girl who is choosing the stage as a profession.

With talent, with influence, with extraordinary good luck, it is possible to become an actress and rise to quite high rank in that capacity, yet avoid the pitfalls spread for vain-glorious novices who expect big salaries, magnificent dresses, and unlimited jewels as the reward of their services to the drama. Of course, these are all to be had—at a price. Even incompetence has found a disinterested patron to give it a theatre of its own, if only it be beautiful or *chic*, or unscrupulous enough to demand such philanthropic interest !

One need only linger at the stage door of any large theatre, provincial or otherwise, to gather from the tone of discussion, or the things discussed, that stage life has a coarsening influence on both men and women. Notably is this tone to be found in companies

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connected with comic opera and pantomime, or any large spectacular or melodramatic play. In the best London theatres an actress's life is, of course, free from such drawbacks as I have alluded to. Her dressing-room is as sacred as her chamber at home. All that is coarse and common is banished from her sight and hearing. She is treated as any lady in her own drawing-room is treated, and she is indignant when any outside critic dares to hint at such a thing as stage immorality. She declares that everything connected with *her* special knowledge of the life is holy and pure and without blemish. She may be right. But the sun's light is not confined to one spot, and the eyes of the world can travel over a larger area than the immaculate temples of Thespis in the West End of London. And in those eyes the sins and follies of the stage loom larger than its virtues, though its virtues are undeniable.

But to return to the subject of the stage as a profession for women. Granted its fascinations and its dangers, let us now consider its

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exactions. There is no royal, or purchasable, road to fame. By fame, of course, I do not mean notoriety—the notoriety which attaches to a certain performance by reason of a dimple in the chin, or an abnormally impudent wink, or a perfect figure. Such things have drawn crowded houses; so have infamy and diamonds; but I mean fame of the deserved and lasting order. And this has to be worked for steadily and perseveringly.

A great authority on stage purity and stage life defines the essentials of success as “Imagination and study.” It is one thing to wear beautiful clothes, to look well or speak well, and another to create a part even out of the simplest materials. And sometimes an apparently insignificant part may be made to stand out, crystallised by the force of genius into vivid life. To the actress who can make small things great, it is easy enough to make great things magnificent. But she is an actress born, not made, and the stage is her natural profession and the world at large her debtor.

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Such an actress is, however, becoming rarer every year. In her stead, we have pretty women, magnificently clothed women, women with mannerisms and tricks, shoulder-shrugging gestures, a perpetual smile or a perpetual wail. In fact a purely artificial presentment of artifice, instead of an artistic conception of Art.

Yet still the agent's and manager's offices are besieged by eager claimants, all sure that they have only to go on the stage to be a success; to be applauded, praised, and salaried according to their—modest?—deserts. All breathless, eager, panting for an engagement, anything, any part, so only they may "strut their little hour" before their fellow-man, or woman, dignified by the name of actress.

And once that ambition is attained, what of results? What of that "behind the scenes" of which the great applauding public are ignorant? What of the insults and indifference of agents who pocket fees and do little in return? What of the wretchedly paid provincial tour with its hardships and

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privations, the scanty fare, the wretched lodgings ("digs" in theatrical parlance), the long hours of rehearsal, the constant study needed for a varied repertoire, the uncongenial companionship, the perils to health and life from draughty stage, insanitary conditions, imperfect machinery, and unwholesome food snatched at all sorts of odd hours? What, worst of all, and by no means least, of the bogus manager who leaves his company in the lurch; of promised salaries that are never paid, of straits and difficulties that break down both strength and fortitude?

Are these to be ignored when that idea of "going on the stage" first takes possession of a girl's mind. Hundreds of such girls have lived to rue the false glamour of that life; have failed or fainted with heart-sickness on the hard and stony road that leads to success.

Feminine virtue is never so cheap but that stage morality cannot further cheapen it. In and out of the profession, the woman who

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shrinks from its coarser aspect is always unpopular. Even if she will not "give," she must at least seem to "take."

To be dignified, or delicate, or modest of speech and manner is to be "stuck up." Such airs are not to be put up with from the novice, and even the greatest actress has been that—once in her life. By the time she has conquered Fate and won a name and position, she has known the full bitterness of sacrifices made for that purpose. Has eaten the bread of sorrow and drunk the waters of hopelessness; perhaps half broken her heart for sake of someone whose love meant less than honour claimed.

The stage is so often looked at from one point of view that it is but fair to point out its hardships and difficulties; its dangers as well as its triumphs. The wear and tear, the purely physical exertions are in themselves deserving of grave consideration. Yet there are girls who think that "going on the stage" means merely an introduction to a manager, an immediate engagement at twenty

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pounds a week, and the admiration of applauding crowds. Very, very different is the reality. Drudgery is part of the discipline, and the pay at first very poor. A good voice will bring in thirty or thirty-five shillings a week in chorus, but it has to take the risk of uncertainty; long waits, broken promises, and wearisome tours. The *prima donna* of an operatic company has before now found herself with the magnificent sum of four pounds as sole receipts of an eight weeks' engagement that had promised the same sum as a weekly salary! If the principal fares so badly, what can the less important members of the company expect? Semi-starvation, and an intimate acquaintance with the pawnshop, is about what they get.

Those born into the theatrical profession, used to it from childhood, so to say, are better able to cope with its drawbacks than the fluttering outside moths who are attracted by its glitter. To the former it has become second nature, and they grow accustomed to its shifts and trials, and hopes and fears, as the

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mere novice drifting towards them can never grow. Acting means much more than it seems to mean. What represents ease is often its greatest difficulty. The very overcoming of stage fright is a severe tax on the nervous system. Therefore brain and body require careful training before that ordeal of "facing the public" is determined on.

The art of acting has been desecrated by stage realism, and shackled with forms and commonplace traditions. Only here and there can genius lift it to higher meaning. Make it art so true to nature that one ceases to remember it is only—art.

When men or women feel within their souls that it is given them to embody a beautiful thought, to present a noble or graphic picture, to teach a lesson or paint a living truth, then let them turn to the stage as a profession and speak that truth and deliver that message, and by so much as their genius teaches, so much is the world the better for that message, and so much is art ennobled. But to use the gifts of nature for baser purpose

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than this is to smirch the name of what should be great and glorious. And that it has been so smirched the annals of stage-life prove only too plainly. Therefore it is that the name of "actress" has fallen into disrepute, and that many a mother shrinks from permitting her young daughter to face the ordeal of the dramatic profession.

Should natural gifts point to that profession, however, there is one safe course to adopt. A good training-school in which to learn the A B C of acting. The modes of voice production, the importance of every gesture and every movement. The subjugation of self; the art of studying the smallest part as important to the whole play, and not merely to the individual acting it. From training-school to agent's office is the next step, unless luck, or influence, or money can secure an immediate engagement. Then the real life begins. For even a first engagement must end, and at its conclusion the first difficulty again faces the student. Salaries are small, and the work is hard, and only a

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real love for the profession can lighten those hardships. Hope is the actor's sheet-anchor. Surely Pope had him in his mind when he wrote those celebrated lines—

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast.”

He is always expecting some better luck—something that is to “turn up trumps,” and bring him fame and wealth. It is as much his equipment as his “make-up” box, and of greater comfort than his salary. If true of the actor, it is even more so of the actress. The proverbial courage and patience of woman carry her over the troubled seas of the first arduous years. She will not look failure in the face, or breathe that word—despair.

To her the stage is an ever-living magician under whose influence she breathes and moves; by whose spell she touches the skirts of rapture, and traverses the whole scale of human emotion! But not to all is this instinct given; not for many does the magician weave that spell.

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If in after years the artist who is actor, or actress-horn, stands upon the hill-top of success, and gazes down the long path of victories and failures that have led to it, then may he or she be thankful for that gift of Hope already spoken of. For across the tear-blotted page of youth, and strife, and endeavour streams the sun of triumph, and its glory compensates for all past suffering !

How sweet a wonder is the fame won by untiring effort and personal sacrifice, glorified as time goes on by a love and admiration that can never die ! For they are the reward of genius, and genius claims them. The laurel-wreath may be watered by tears, but it is good to have wrested it from jealous hands ; better still to know oneself worthy of its crown.

PART III

MEDITATIONS

ON CHARITY

ON MODERN CHRISTMAS

ON ARTS OF QUACKERY

ON UNREAL POLITENESS

ON HUSBANDS AND WIVES

ON FASHION—ITS USE AND ABUSE

ON THE IMPERTINENCES OF WEALTH

ON THE MARRIAGEABLE AGE

ON THE YOUTH OF TEMPERAMENT

ON THE INCREASE OF VULGARITY
AMONGST WOMEN

ON THE SUBURBAN CRITIC OF MORALS

THE PROBLEMS OF CHARITY

THE English are reputed a great nation. They are also a charitable nation, probably as just and fair-dealing as any of the world's civilised millions. But in few civilised countries can such a mass of misery, want, and wretchedness be found as London shows with the approach of every winter.

Year after year the same problem and the same distress confront us. Charity has its good intentions, but charity cannot offer more than temporary relief. And such relief has disadvantages. Food and fire and clothing are necessary gifts which tend to pauperise the lazy and ill-conditioned, and offend the prouder sensibilities of the independent worker. Recently a well-known writer held forth on the sorrows of millionairism, but appeared to forget that if it were not for the

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wealthy classes the poor would suffer even more than they do; for it is only wealth that creates employment on all sides,—in offices, towns, mansions; by means of amusement and of extravagance; in great cities, as in the humble country-side; in the labour market, and the share market, the factory and the workshop; the large emporiums, and the small provincial stores. Besides, the hospitals and convalescent homes of this country are almost entirely endowed and supported by the wealthy classes. The first duty of the millionaire is to use his millions for the benefit of his less fortunate fellows, and, to his credit be it said, he assuredly does this, and often by more secret and indirect methods than popular novelists seem aware of!

But if the most charitable-minded patrons of charity were consulted on the present-day problem, they would have to confess they were facing a blank wall. What use to give huge sums one year, to see the evil looming large and threatening as ever in the next? What use to subscribe and plan and collect

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and ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~man~~ ^{are} funds wrung from pitying hearts, only to know that the cause is rooted too firmly for cure—and almost for relief.

It is a canker eating deep into the social soil of England, and demanding the surgeon's knife, not the soothing plaster of annual charity. Does the millionaire understand that there are people—even classes of people—to whom his offer of a sovereign is as great an insult as he would feel it to be presented with a 6d. Christmas-box? There are men—hundreds and thousands of men, and women, too—who would rather starve than accept charity; whose one cry to King and Government is: "Give us work by which to live honestly and decently," or devise some method by which the English artisan shall not be sweated and pauperised and ground into the dust of alien competition!

However wise or deep the thoughts spent on reviewing this problem, they cannot be too profound to meet its increasing importance.

At present there seems to be a sort of mental paralysis in the air. No one knows

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what to do, and each man waits on his fellow-man to act, or suggest action.

The powers of legislation are, as usual, restricted by the fetters of convention and the obligations of party prejudices. There has been a wide and sudden burst of generosity on the part of Throne and nation. Money was called for and money was given; but the great question is still unanswered, the riddle still unsolved. Does charity really help those who deserve help? Does it flow through the right channel? Does it benefit the real sufferers? Does it in any way permeate to the root of the problem—this ever-recurring march of misery through London's noblest thoroughfares and historical streets? Does it help the City slave to recognise his birthright of citizenship; to learn of life's wider outlook, of some clean, soul-uplifting joys, something of Nature that is not cinder heaps and smoke-blackened roofs, and food refuse, and polluted water? When will King or Government or civilisation give to modern nations what Rome and Greece

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gave to their peoples—cleanliness, healthful surroundings, just laws, sight and sound of nature?

Even with their attendant drawbacks of Imperial effrontery, these were good gifts. At least, they tended to health and wisdom; not the debasing brutality of public-houses and pawnshops, and herded crowds, whose miserable dens are scarce fit for a self-respecting animal!

How shall these things be remedied?

That is the question of the day; the question asked by the helpless and patient poor; the question for the great wealthy governing bodies of our great towns; for the millionaire, as his motor-car whirls him to places of beauty, where no degrading slur of poverty dare show itself; for all that body of noble and titled and generous persons who so cheerfully subscribe cheque and charity when stimulated by the example of Royalty.

It is a question for Church and King; for State and individual.

THE MOCKERY OF MODERN CHRISTMAS

EVERY year, with the approach of December, an attempt is made to resuscitate the old Spirit of Christmas. But that spirit is wise enough to distinguish between shams and reality, and at each annual call he retires further into the background of the Old-fashioned Things.

He knows he is not really desired; that one half of the world grumbles at his approach, and the other half tries to forget he ever existed, save in old-fashioned books and pictures. What place has he amongst whizzing motors and electric trams? Who looks upon his advent as anything but a tax upon purse and mind and spirits? Who can throw themselves into "festive scenes" with

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the gusto and goodwill and enjoyment of the old Dickens' days?

Two or three years ago an attempt was made to bring out a *real* old-time Christmas Annual, and to keep a *real* old-fashioned Christmas. Alas! alas! did ever good intentions fizzle out so mournfully? The Annual had not one spark of real Christmas humour; of fun, heartiness, interest, or romance. It was like a damp squib, and refused to go off—even at the bookstalls. As for the party who assembled for the Christmas dinner, they brought everything except the *spirit* of the occasion. The weather was damp and foggy; the Yule-log was also damp, and spluttered dismally. The wit was forced; the speeches dull; the food ominous of indigestion instead of appetite. The wassail bowl, and the punch, and the mistletoe bough seemed all out of keeping with the modern temperament, and the party broke up with a sigh of relief, vowing never to repeat the experiment!

Each year the dismal mockery becomes more dismal. Those who can afford to go

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away rush off to warm and sunny lands where they can forget that it is Christmas-time in England. Those who remain at home sigh in their hearts over foolish efforts at conviviality. The very youth and childhood of these modern days care nothing for Christmas as a season, nor accept its spirit with anything but a selfish expectation of presents and "tips"; a bored tolerance of children's parties; a conviction that the pantomime will be the usual "silly rot"; and a source of wonder that such an institution as Christmas could ever have been established.

Christmas Day as it shows itself spells a series of dismal functions. It begins with the clamour of church bells; the memory that there are "special services"; that the humble incidents of Bethlehem have been magnified by sacerdotalism into a bewildering ceremony of "early celebrations," choral "masses," and sermons in which the dreariest of platitudes vie with stereotyped phrases of clerical Christmas greetings. To these services

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flock crowds of cleric-worshipping women and martyrsed school-children. Men wisely hold aloof.

Having salved conscience by such means, the devotees turn their attention to feeding and present-giving. There are a certain number of dreary hours to be got through before that next dreary function—the Christmas dinner.

Perhaps this function is brightened by the appearance of relatives; relatives whom one detests, but who, in accordance with time-honoured custom, it is one's duty to invite at Christmas-time. Mothers-in-law, old aunts and uncles, disagreeable cousins, unpleasant schoolboys, and "advanced" young school-misses, who talk of hockey, and "goff," and Sandow exercises. In godly middle-class households and *after* Sunday services, there is a feeling that cards are improper; that billiards would be a crime; and that music should be only of the Handel and Haydn "Hallelujah Chorus" type. Everything seems forced and uncongenial. For, as I said before, the spirit of the season is lost. It vanished

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with the frost and skating, the chirping robins at the window, the gay and merry coaching days, the good old-fashioned country squire, and the good old-fashioned hearts that are now only a tradition. •

Advancement means loss as well as gain. We cannot travel round the world in eighty days and keep the old content with the "Muggleton" coach. We cannot live at high pressure and be all that is "smart" and modish and *chic*, and yet know the simple charity which thinketh no ill—the generous spirit which longs to and does help its less fortunate neighbour. We cannot live beyond our incomes (for fear our friends and acquaintances should deem us not worth knowing) and yet forget that Christmas is a time of reckoning and squaring up those incomes to meet corresponding deficiencies. We no longer enjoy simple things, because the *spirit* of enjoyment has gone out of us. We are pessimistic and peevish, and given to question everything under the sun, from the creation of that sun itself to the reason

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of its spots; from the use of monarchies and governments to the introduction of Free Trade and the proper speed for motor-cars!

Discontent is the keynote of this modern pessimism. The joy of living has been displaced by a morbid desire to question the need for existence; the *raison d'être* of the world and all that therein is. Few are content with their place or position in life. The curse of the millionaire has fallen over the merely "rich." The craving for notoriety has ousted the simple delights of the artist soul. The restlessness and selfishness of modern women and modern men are exemplified by every action of their lives and the publicity given to those actions by the Press. Notoriety has another side to its effrontery. It sets the thinker and the wise man pondering over the senseless existence in which half the world seems to glory, while for sake of such existence, toil, suffering, hardship and starvation pay their heavy exactions on the other half.

"But such things have always been," say

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our politicians and our legislators. "You cannot alter them"; and they bring out statistics of birth and death, and sickness and poverty, and crime and wrong, and disaster, until one's brain reels, and one's heart grows sick, and one wonders no longer that the spirit of joy has departed, and that with it has fled the spirit of Christmas. All the honest, jovial, loving, kindly temperaments that to-day would only seem "bad form" !

Modern Christmas has discarded ideals and abolished enjoyment. It has no more to do with simple piety, with "Peace and Goodwill," than the 7 a.m. Holy Eucharist of Ritualism has to do with the simple Last Supper, a ceremony altered and twisted out of all original form and original intention by the vanity and authority of priestcraft.

Who looks now upon Church services as representative of the Saviour's life and teaching? They are a direct contradiction. Christ's "Last Supper" with His disciples was an evening meal. He gave them the

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bread and wine *after* food. Our modern clerics insist that the ceremony must be performed in the morning and *before* breaking one's fast. Who is right—the Ordainer of the Sacrament, or those who have distorted and altered its original meaning?

"Christ-Mass." The words speak for themselves—speak for the first institution of the day as a religious Festival. Such it was in the Roman Catholic Church. Such it has remained to that Church with all its appurtenances of Mariolatry and Popery and Saint worship. But after abolishing such things in the Protestant ritual of England, after wading through seas of blood for freedom of thought, and freedom from the yoke of priestly persecution, we are creeping stealthily back to the very bondage we once abused.

It is this miserable hypocrisy, this "halting between two opinions," this shuffling of clergy and congregation between the outward sign and the inward meaning, that has sapped all the joy and gladness of the season, and is looking in England of as little account

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as it is in most Roman Catholic countries. The French, the Italians, the Spaniards, the Portuguese, these nations only observe Christmas as their Church and their Mass direct. Perhaps Christian England will soon be following their example; will make the day even more of a mockery than it is at present!

Look at the bored faces in the streets, the forced attempt at restaurant gaiety (which only means over-eating and drinking), the endeavour to *be* anywhere, *go* anywhere, save remain in one's own home! Are not these signs of the times—of the change that has crept into the soul and heart of the nation?

Look at the young. Look at them before the shop windows, only grumbling "same old rot" before the piles of toys which represent starvation wage to the unfortunate workers. Look at them at the pantomime—bored, listless, weary ere the entertainment is half over; roused only by something specially vulgar or specially up-to-date on the part of the comedian; criticising the principal girl's *figure* with the modest pretence of *laughing*.

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young manhood ; wishing the holidays were over ; unable to appreciate simple country joys ; critical of gifts ; impossible to please even with lavish generosity ; hostile to younger brothers and sisters, insolent to parents, impatient of advice or control.

Ask the modern hostess what she would not sooner do than give a children's Christmas party ?—a party where romps and games are tabooed as "rotten," and dancing is a condescension. A party where the conjurer or comedian must be a leading light in his special profession, and the supper the work of a *chef*.

Ask at the "breaking up" of schools where is the boisterous, whole-hearted fun and riot, and even insubordination of the good old days ? Ask at nursery doors for the old, quaint belief in Santa Claus ? Turn lower—step into area and kitchen, and listen to the opinions there as to Christmas being a "festive season." The servants are only "worried to death" over the extra work it brings ; the necessities of their own Christmas shopping ; the nuisance of buying cards and

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sending presents, because Mary Jane nowadays must do everything her mistress does, from the wearing of a string of mock pearls round her throat to the keeping up of a visiting circle with its attendant taxes.

Ask the postman, wearied and overburdened by extra work and extra weight of cards and parcels! Ask the tired post-office officials, and the distracted railway clerks and porters and guards! Ask the pale host of shop-girls, with their aching feet and their aching heads, driven well-nigh desperate over Christmas customers and Christmas purchases! Ask the poor pantomime "fairies," kept for long hours at rehearsal, weary and faint for want of food; working by day and night to be ready for the Boxing Day performance! Ask the weary drivers of laden wagons and carriers' carts! Ask the poor dumb horses, straining back, and neck, and nerve under "extra" heavy loads; toiling over miles of slippery, over-crowded streets; lashed and beaten, their mouths wrenched and torn by brutal hands; their piteous, patient eyes

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searching the careless faces and seeing never one that pities them a little for sake of Christmas-time !

And so on and so on, through every grade of life, be it that of toiler or idler, rich or poor, high or low, moral or immoral, Church-goer or Chapel-goer, sinner or saint, clergy or laity. The *feeling* of Christmas is not with them any longer.

They pretend it is — pretend *seriously*, strenuously, almost painfully. But that very insistence makes the pretence more apparent.

Joy does not want to be spoken. It is self-manifest. It lights the eye and flushes the cheeks, and brings smiles to the lips. Look out on the world of to-day and read its greeting of Christmas. If you find one such sign as this in ten out of every ten thousand faces, you may count Christmas as less a mockery than modernity proclaims it.

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THE English and American nations will surely stand out in the later history of the world as examples of a childlike faith in advertised nostrums. Probably if the protecting stamp were less an object of importance to the Revenue than is the public health, some steps would be taken to put a stop to the wholesale introduction of poisonous drugs and injurious chemicals, whose rightful fate should be a Fifth of November bonfire.

In the present day quackery has become quite a fine art. The picturesque forms of modern advertisement are at its service. Schools have been formed for its benefit, whose curriculum consists of "brag," "puff," and "boast." The most ingenious or startling form of puffery finds a salaried reward. It is impossible to take up a journal or magazine

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of the present day without being disgusted and annoyed at the fulsome intrusion of advertised quackery in some shape or form. It appeals to health, to invalidism, to vanity, and to credulity. It would assuredly do away with every ill on the face of the earth if there was one grain of wholesome truth amongst its chaff. If? For certainly the "ills that flesh is heir to" show no sign of amelioration. Bald heads and scanty tresses are not unknown—even amongst Royalty and the peerage. Yet if a real cure for baldness were in existence, surely it would have been *on evidence* where money is no object!

Half or even a quarter of a century ago, our daily journals and our periodicals contained useful information. Now the information columns have been devoted to the advertising fiend, whose ingenuity crops up in a surprising manner and under startling and alarming headlines. Every ailment and complaint, every bodily disfigurement, every possible or impossible defect, are catered for by modern quackery. Disease is no

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longer the secret of patient and physician; it is an openly proclaimed horror. It is invented for the nervous and timid by precautionary advertisements wrapped round the seemingly innocent liver pill. It is forced upon our notice in every patent food and patent medicine that add their quota of assistance to the Revenue. Its warnings haunt us on public boardings, at railway stations, in trams, and in omnibuses. Its advertised cures desecrate the green fields and quiet pastures of the country. It has become a blatant, hideous, disgusting nuisance, and, above all, it has opened up the avenues of licensed fraud!

Had people the sense to *think*, or to question, they would assuredly be doubtful of the power of *one* remedy to cure almost every physical ill or ailment; to be at once a tonic and a soporific; the preventive of certain disease, and yet a cure for that and all other diseases. No two constitutions are quite alike, though "liver" is a generic term. What is good for one is poison to another.

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To believe that dry chaff and chopped-up grain is an ideal "nerve food" is a childish proof of successful window-decoration at the expense of human stomachs!

To claim that hair can be forced to grow on a bald head, or resumé its natural colour on a grey one, is another evidence of public gullibility.

It is not quite a *sécret de Polichinelle* that certain people are willing to give names and addresses as security for boastful advertisements. Neither is it exactly an unprofitable business so to do. But it is a little confusing when an inquirer proceeds to verify the reference and finds that the advertiser is the possessor of a wig! I mention this as a personal experience, and it applies to a certain professor of the useful art of "hair producing," whose advertisements were at one time in every paper that one took up. For my own relief, and from a genuine desire to benefit the pockets of suffering humanity, I venture to state that there is *no such thing* as a real cure for baldness, or fading hair. If

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there were, kings and queens, princes and princesses, public men and women would all possess luxuriant tresses, and defy time or illness, care or worry, to affect their appearance.

Nature and art are diametrically opposed. True that when one fails to be of service, the other wisely offers itself. But it is not the *real* thing. It is only a sham or a substitute. It is of use certainly; but to proclaim it can and *does* replace nature is to proclaim a lie—to call down ridicule and comment, and criticism and contempt! The stupendous frauds of advertisers should be a source of wonder to the unbiassed and thoughtful mind. They are also a living proof of public credulity as summed up by the illustrious Carlyle.

To make people believe anything it is only necessary to pound it into their ears often enough, or let it flare before their dull eyes with persevering magnanimity. The trick is bound to succeed—in time. To be constantly assured of a thing is to end in believing it.

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Of course it is not absolutely necessary that the public should help the inventor of a famous pill to the qualified advantages of a palatial residence and half a dozen motor-cars, or repay his vulgar desecration of the countryside by a princely income.

But that is merely the public's kind and generous method of helping quackery to fortune. That lives are sacrificed or constitutions ruined matters little to governments, or to the great unthinking community at large.

Who stops to ask whether one remedy can possibly meet *all* requirements? Who has the sense to turn aside when 1s. 1½d. and a stamp of probity give assurance of universal health? Very few, if any, to whom a quack remedy appeals as a saving of doctor's bills. Yet they might remember that the body has many organs, and it stands to reason they cannot *all* be treated by the same remedy. Cases of death by misadventure or by faulty treatment are not half so common as cases

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of death from taking useless medicines ; by the sending in to the chemist for " something " for a cough, a headache, a backache, or any of the hundred and one little ailments that annoy humanity ; and that a patent medicine seems so eager to cure.

A well-known paper recently quoted a case illustrating this point. A woman living in Liverpool sent to a chemist for a " headache powder." He gave it ; she took it, and died shortly afterwards. The analyst discovered that the said powder contained mercurial salts to an extent corresponding to 0.63 grain of oxide of mercury ! The chemist could give no explanation, and the jury returned a verdict to the effect that " death was due to mercurial poisoning, but there was *no evidence to show how the mercury had got into the powder !* "

No questions seem to have been asked ; no order made for the destruction of the rest of this poisonous filth. There probably it still is, and still will be—a danger to the community, an easy recipe for suicide, and a penny adver-

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tisement of death to every unsuspecting girl or boy, woman or man, who has a headache !

One of the crying scandals of the day is the open and shameless trade in licensed poison ! For a wrong or improper remedy is as much a poison to a vitiated system as if laudanum, or morphia, or arsenic, or strychnine were poured into it wholesale. The habit of flying to patent medicines as a cure for real or fancied ailments is a most dangerous habit. Many a patent pill has a heavy score of disorders to answer for, brought about by its use, and encouraged by advertisement of its universal qualifications. Many a healthy physique has been broken down by a craze for taking puffed and useless remedies—remedies whose patented warnings *against* disease only too often result in self-verification. The pamphlets wrapped round bottle or pill-box are but so many terrors to the gullible public, who read of symptoms until they actually convince themselves that they possess them.

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Has no one the courage to expose the consequences of rash attempts to reduce obesity by so-called tablets and quack remedies?

A physician recently related to me the pitiful story of a girl who suffered from some mysterious illness that puzzled her family and every specialist they consulted. Finally, a nurse in attendance discovered the secret after long and patient watching. The girl imagined she was too fat for beauty, and set to work to reduce herself by taking a remedy advertised in a certain lady's paper, and professing to give away a sample on application. When the truth was discovered and the stuff thrown into the dust-bin, the girl began to recover. But her folly had nearly cost her life, and impoverished her parents by many hundred pounds.

The danger of self-doctoring is not half impressed upon the young. The "family" pill, the saline draught, the complexion clearer, the spot and pimple remover,—all these, how-

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ever innocent they sound, may have future dangers lurking behind them. It is *that* danger which has made the fortune of their inventors—the danger of habit. Humanity is a slave to its habits. That is why drink and drugs are so deadly in their effects. It is so easy to begin, so impossible to leave off. A store-chemist has now become an approved method of avoiding doctor's bills! A penny, or a sixpenny, or a 1s. 1½d. cure is always at hand for every disease and complaint under the sun. The young assistant advises; the purchaser departs in peace. Perhaps the remedy has been already familiarised by gaudy and wondrous illustrations, and concocted testimonials. If the result is not satisfactory, no one is any the wiser, unless the coroner happens to be called in!

Cases such as that of the unfortunate woman in Liverpool might be multiplied a hundred-fold if only people had the courage to expose frauds, and if only quack advertisements were not so important an item in the profits of a newspaper. Policy dictates the closing

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of the press columns to such complaints or grievances as would interfere with the "paying" side of journalism. No one—even an editor—can afford to benefit his fellow-man at his own expense. Therefore has the noble art of quackery become one of the popular trades of the day.

But quackery does not apply to medicines only. The market of imposture is varied. Face washes, skin creams, soaps, and powders are other traps for the unwary and the vain. They are even a surer road to fortune for the conscienceless advertiser. Here art is specially called in to aid in the service of fraud. Lovely faces, exquisite complexions, unwrinkled skins, beautiful figures are displayed on page and cover and illustrated device. The special concoction that is to give the pictured beauty or complexion or figure is temptingly portrayed, though the said portrayal is in no way a guarantee of advertised results. Hair specialists often offer a premium for photographs of persons with fine heads of hair.

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They then publish the picture as a result of their nostrums, instead of a natural warning against their use!

The amount of money that annually finds its way into the pockets of fraudulent charlatans is appalling. The public seem to have a childlike faith in pictured "cures," and lavishly advertised patent remedies. If one thing fails, they try another, and so on and on through the whole gamut of pill, potion, ointment, or lotion, until finally their drugged and semi-poisoned system relinquishes the struggle for an unnatural existence.

If the store-chemist has proved a blessing in one instance, he has much to answer for in another; for self-taken and self-prescribed remedies have proved dangerous foes to the human constitution, and sown the seeds of many strange and fatal complaints.

Now and then a startling experience like that of the headache powders, or some increase in infant mortality, brings down a storm of protest. But nothing is done. The wretched persons are still sold, the profits still increase,

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the advertisement columns of the press give an assurance of success, and the public settles down once more to its primitive faith in quackery !

UNREAL POLITENESS

IN this vast world of shams there is only one test of sincerity—and that is misfortune.

As long as you are of social importance the world pays its due compliment to such a position. It matters little how you have achieved it. Some things are better left unquestioned, and one of them is the method of money-making. Men who have not disdained to fight their way to titles through much unpleasantness are perfectly aware that they occupy a precarious position. Society is a ladder up which a thousand travellers are pushing each other in eager desire to reach the topmost rung. Whence springs this foolish ambition? For only those born in the purple can ever wear it with grace. The scramblers are merely tolerated and made use of.

Yet so strangely constituted is human nature

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that a kick from Royalty is esteemed an honour in comparison with the hearty handshake of an equal. The moment wealth or success crowns the efforts of the worker his ambition is not to spend the one or use the other sensibly, and among a set who would understand and appreciate him, but to employ them as a lever to raise himself to the level of a higher social altitude.

He knows he will be snubbed openly or tolerated with mere forced friendliness; that he will have to scheme for invitations, and lavish money like water, and yet he perseveres! He accepts the snubs and the marked impoliteness of "Society" with equanimity. He sees people brought to his house and dining at his table who are quite indifferent as to his own personality. He shakes hands for one blissful evening with titled insolence that will forget his name the next moment. His entertainment is only appraised by the money spent on it, and if the smallest hitch should occur it is held up to unsparing ridicule. Over and over again have phil-

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osophers satirised this extraordinary delusion of humanity; have pointed out that men are welcomed for what they can give, not for what they are. Surely, to be content with one's rightful position is more satisfactory than to achieve the contemptuous acceptance of inequality!

Two things stamp present-day manners. A politeness that is unreal, and a vulgarity that is labelled "smart."

Grace or courtesy is old-fashioned. Sympathy and consideration are rarely displayed. The women who crowd to each other's "days," discuss each other's gowns and admirers, whisper of each other's scandals, betray each other's confidences, and envy each other's capacity for saving appearances at any cost—what can they know of real interest or real affection?

Each new fad of the hour, from the cake-walk to Plato, has been an absorbing craze at which the lookers-on have laughed. Possibly the conversion of a Princess will now set religion on a new pinnacle of fashion, and hold up "perversion" as the sincerest flat-

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tery that a loyal circle can offer to the Throne !

There is nothing too absurd or too exaggerated for the taste of modern life. There is nothing it so much enjoys as the pillorying itself for the amazement of a gaping world outside its own immediate followers. Perhaps it believes itself all-important. Perhaps it, too, accepts imitation of its follies as flattery to its own ingenuity of invention. To be callous to people's feelings, indifferent to their prejudices, and alive only to their degrees of usefulness—this is the basis of modern politeness. A *quid pro quo* for everything ; from company promotership to an introduction at Court.

Social ambition has struck its roots too deeply in social soil for any hope of eradication.

It is the pivot on which the collective interests of life move. It accepts the smile of insincerity as a sign of friendship, and takes toleration for assurance of equality. For how many of all those whom she visits

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and who visit her, does a fashionable woman really care? For what unit of the crowd who throng her staircase and figure in her dinner lists does she feel one spark of human interest?

Politeness is but the social veneer of indifference. It is far too thin to bear the smallest weight, or hint of strain. Who has not seen and pitied the call of a displaced favourite, unconscious as yet that she is displaced? The surprised insolence, the glacial welcome with which her hostess greets her? Yet a month, perhaps even a week, previously, she had every reason to believe herself a favourite. But something has gone wrong; been said or done, or discovered. Henceforth that glacial recognition will be all she will receive until her own sense of dignity prompts her to stand aside and give "cut for cut."

How poor and foolish and unworthy it all is! Surely the standard of merit in an individual should be that of his own deeds, his own worth; his own gifts of mind or genius.

I have heard women boast of an intro-

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duction that would neither benefit nor honour them. Nay, worse, they have not scrupled to stoop to unutterable meanness in order that they might boast afterwards to their friends of the cordiality of the "dear duchess," or the "sweet princess," whom the exigencies of charity bazaars or concerts brought within their orbit of recognition !

Why should Mrs. Smith, good, sensible soul, esteem the tolerant politeness of a peeress, or a minor royalty, as a priceless boon ? Why weary her friends and acquaintances with a history of her awkward curtesy, her proffered "bouquet," or the tepid condescension of two extended fingers ? Does she for one moment think that the illustrious personage was conscious of her unimportant self—was playing any part but that of an automaton engaged at so much an hour ? There must be a terrible amount of snobbishness in the world, and a terrible craving for that foothold of "superiority" which, after all, is only limited to the brief span of individual existence.

In women this trait is specially noticeable ;

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yet women are the cruellest foes to the *parvenu*, male or female. The careless nod, the vacant smile, the crushing "I wonder who you are" that too often greets an effort at recalling previous introduction, are more potent snubs than downright unacknowledgment would be.

I have heard anguished Suburbia railing at Mayfair: "Last time I met her she was so gracious, so charming, and to-day — why, she didn't even seem to remember me!"

That is just one of Mayfair's little ways. She is a Lady of Quality in her own estimation. She lives for her own "set" and understands it. She has no need to supplement her acquaintances with unfashionable and impossible persons thrown in her way by chance. And woe betide such ignorant claimants of her notice.

How long will it be before sober judgment comes into play, and convinces the middle classes and the *nouveaux riches* and the unfashionable strata of society that their truest wisdom lies in being content with their natural position in life; that to benefit humanity by

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their wealth is a far finer thing than to lavish it on titled *roués*, or lift themselves into undesirable prominence amongst a set of people who only use them for their own selfish convenience?

But it seems impossible to convince the millionaire and his wife that the acceptance of society is not a glorious and wonderful thing; that the senseless amusements and extravagances of which they are witness, and to which they are graciously permitted to contribute, are not delightful pageants. When Ouida drew that picture in the *Massarenes* of Lady Kenilworth's introduction to society of the coarse and brutal "Billy," she drew a by no means exaggerated portrait.

Such people will persistently attempt to "get into society," and as persistently accept snubs, and insolence, and ridicule as the reward of success.

SPOILT HUSBANDS—AND WIVES

A GOOD husband is "born, not made," even as is the poet, and like most good things he is rare. Unfortunately, too, he is seldom successfully mated.

An observant looker-on at the domestic unities may have noticed that an exemplary, patient, and moral man is invariably attached to a shrewish, impetuous, and exacting woman! That one of high intellectual gifts has for mate a foolish or worldly-minded person to whom the material things of life appeal more than the intellectual. Again, a modest and contented disposition is frequently allied to a restless and ambitious one, thus seeming to prove that man and woman are attracted by the very opposite qualities to those they individually possess.

Marriage is a veritable lottery. Its prizes

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are few in comparison with its blanks. The poetic theory of the "twin souls" rarely outlasts the engagement stage. Every week of every month of the first year of marriage is a stage of disillusion—an attempt to re-adjust ideals and ideas to the hard, cold prose of every-day existence; to reconcile the devoted, patient, all-perfect lover to the mere ordinary man, who flies into an ordinary human rage if breakfast is late—if his razor has proved inefficient—or his morning paper is not on the table, and bills—are !

Divided by a great gulf indeed are the romance and passion of love from the commonplace exactions of marriage.

It is hard to believe, but it is a fact. Therefore to ensure something like content and happiness in the marriage state it is better to choose a companion whose tastes and temper suit your own; who has something better than mere personal charm, or physical beauty, on which to depend. There are some fitted by nature to bear the yoke of matrimony, and there are others to whom it never can

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and never will be anything but a yoke; a burden—a harass—an irritant. .

From the first moment they realise bondage instead of freedom, exactions and obligations instead of latitude, they grow restive, and their wives have a bad time of it. The wise woman recognises this sense of restiveness, and, instead of opposing, yields to it as far as is possible. It is not so much a question of the latchkey and the club as it is of the non-interference with certain habits that have become second nature—the ceasing to impose restrictions when they chafe and annoy and are really not required. It would be well for women to remember that men in their ante-married state have been accustomed to perfect freedom : a certain lawless liberty of action. They cannot at once give up this habit—and this sense of freedom. And, indeed, why should they be expected to do so? Taken sensibly and with good humour, the so-called "liberty" often shows itself very harmless if it is not interfered with. Above all it enables a woman to demand the same

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for herself. She recognises that her husband has a life apart from the dual obligations of marriage—and by such recognition renders home a pleasant retreat—an agreeable interlude. Such a wife proves herself a good comrade—and an intelligent companion, and as the years go on they bring her a rich reward.

It is not unusual to hear one woman say to another, "Oh! you spoil your husband! I wouldn't let mine do such and such a thing!" Such a remark is sufficient guarantee of *that* household. It is eloquent of hen-pecking, squabbles—disagreements, and—most vital of all—the struggle for mastery which too often embitters home-life, and estranges hearts that once vowed love, honour, and truth to each other.

There are many men who are spoilt as husbands by the mere fact of being tied down to discipline and bondage. There are others who are all the better for being taken in hand by a strong and capable wife, and taught the true meaning of duty and respon-

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sibility. But with that curious evidence of some marplot at work with human fate, rarely do these cases unite. The husband who requires managing invariably falls to the lot of the one woman in the world incapable of understanding this necessity—and the man who has no talent for domestic life, or need of it, takes to himself a shrew or a fury who makes of that life a hideous travesty of what it ought to be, and *would* be in different and more capable hands!

The extraordinary number of ill-matched couples one daily meets, makes one wonder what can be the real attraction of marriage?

What sudden and injudicious frenzy induces people to rush into an allegiance that—in a very few years—proves to be unsuitable? How is it they are so blind before—so keen-sighted afterwards? Why, also, is it that a woman is so unutterably foolish as not to appreciate a man who has burdened himself with her support, when he might be a free-and-easy and irresponsible bachelor! Who is kind, and good-tempered and generous,

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but owns to a few human faults as well—and does not appreciate their perpetual recapitulation. Why do so many women spoil men even as they spoil horses by too lavish use of spur and whip and bearing rein? Why do they exact so much, and yet show so little gratitude for what needs no exaction!

The proverb says, "A young man married is a man that's marred;" and in nine cases out of ten this is true, for too often a young man marries in haste and in hot-headed passion the very woman whom in later years he would never dream of making his wife. Again, in early marriages, the young man invariably gives in to his wife in everything. Thus—when years of sense and disillusion come upon him, he is bound hand and foot. A weak slave to an unsparing tyrant—who never can be brought to recognise her tyranny, but takes rule as her right, and is never happier than when making the man she should honour appear a fool in the eyes of her friends. Here, indeed, is a spoilt husband who will never perhaps get a chance of proving

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what grit is really in his nature—and would have shown itself under different circumstances.

But as there are many husbands spoilt by tyranny and selfishness, so there are also numbers ruined by weakness, over-petting, and over-consideration ; to whom the wife is an abject slave—a creature to use and abuse as the fancy takes them—the servile ministrant to domestic comfort—a part of the goods and chattels of the house ; never considered, never appreciated, and only missed because of her uses. Men of this disposition merely marry for their own convenience. They are incapable of a true, unselfish devotion, and the more a woman yields the more they exact. It is an odd fact that these wives never seem to realise the actual selfishness of these husbands but are quite content to slave for them, pamper them, study their every wish, and martyrise their own bodies and souls in an unthankful service.

If the dance of life could only bring about a change of partners as does the last figure of

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the Lancers, what a delightful and unexpected readjustment of evils there would be ! The mild, sweet-tempered man might secure the gentle, self-sacrificing wife of the tyrant ! The shrewish, imperative woman find herself confronted by the exacting and selfish Benedict. Intellect—and mental appreciation of its possessor might clasp hands in blissful content. Brilliance and homeliness—wit and beauty — purity and chivalry — meet on neutral ground and take each their meed of human favour and comprehension.* For it is just the lack of comprehension that spoils so many lives. The inability to understand ; to be patient with faults, and kind to virtues.

The offence of a blow to vanity—a sneer at defects—personal or mental—has created wider havoc amongst the domesticities of life than even ill-usage. A woman is too often fed on flatteries by the lover to pardon the blunt truths of the husband. She cannot understand that having once been perfect in his eyes, she should cease to possess perfection. His one unpardonable sin is committed

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When he points out her defects instead of magnifying her good qualities. But, indeed, most men are equally vain with respect to their own virtues—and just, as susceptible to flattery as women.

There is, however, this difference between their relative positions in life. A man mixes with his fellow-men early enough to gauge his own worth by their approval. If his vanity or his weakness or his personal belief in himself are flattered by undue feminine appreciation, his content is often rudely disturbed by the harsher criticism of his fellows. In the rough-and-tumble battle of life there is an excellent camping-ground for conceit. Has a man gifts of person—ability—wit—business capacity—shrewdness—even genius, so have others—many others. Let no man say to himself *his* place in the world can never be filled; *his* mark on its crowded pages never obliterated.

"That which hath been shall be," says the wise preacher. Clear brains—wise minds—noble virtues—cunning inventions—the discoveries of Science—the achievements of Art—

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all have been even as all shall be again. What is new under the sun? Only the individual belief born anew in each newborn human soul. Only the conviction that love, marriage, success, honour, or wealth is to each fresh claimant a more potent factor in the making of happiness than to any previous human entity.

The paths of Fate are narrow, and circumscribed. If two people choose one path and expect to walk abreast they speedily discover its limits. One of the twain must be pushed aside, or give place, or be left behind in the march. Sometimes the separation is but temporary. But very often it is long and lasting; bred of disagreement and intolerance; the escape of a prisoner eager for freedom—not the temporary giving place to a companion of the road.

Alas! that, as the result of selection, such companionship should be so rare! That married life is too often a spoiled—patched—or harmful state and condition, instead of an evidence of happy union. That love so

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seldom mates with comprehension of itself; of its infinite possibilities, desires, and exactions. That even genius of high order has left records of miserable husbands—and misunderstood wives! . And this because tact and sympathy and comprehension have been lacking in either nature; for apart even from love and devotion these qualities are of inestimable value.

If they were joined to love or devotion, perhaps the marriage state would become too perfect for mere ordinary humanity! Something at once unspoil and unspoilable.

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FASHION

WHY has the civilised world permitted Fashion to become its god, its ruler, and its tyrant? Why has it become a power beneath which men and women—sensible in all other respects—tremble and obey?

Common sense derides this slavery. Taste and comfort rebel against it—yet all in vain. Year after year, season after season its decrees go forth, and from royalty to mediocrity, from the duchess to the shop-girl that decree is obeyed.

It is a foolish slavery, and yet the slaves pretend to like their bondage. It is humiliating and yet all-powerful. It is a power we are for ever questioning, and to which we are for ever yielding, and there is no rational explanation to be found either for its existence or our submission. Yet as it *does* exist and will exist—as it has a universal cult of

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devotees and worshippers it must have some use in the world of men and women, despite their ridicule—or the rebellion of critical faculties. But like many existing benefits of civilisation, that use has so long lent itself to abuse that the two are inexplicably entangled with the changing vagaries of each season, and each *mode*.

It has been agreed that the woman of the world must also be the woman of Fashion. She has to dress her part in the pageant of Society as the actress dresses her part in a stage picture. If she is the possessor of good taste, and Nature has gifted her with a sense of what suits her colouring and style, she adapts a fashion to *herself*, and is no mere slave to its idiosyncrasies. But the sense of what is individually becoming seems a rare gift, and more women offend the Fashion than grace it.

A woman without taste is a moral offence to one who possesses that desirable adjunct. She irritates, she shocks, and she perpetrates *inexcusable* atrocities. She neither knows what to wear, nor how to wear it. She

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cannot decide what colour suits her, what style of gown, what length of coat, what shape of hat. As a safeguard she asks, "What is worn just now?"—and thereby falls a prey to the wily shopkeeper and wearied assistant, who hasten to crown her with fashion's latest atrocity and assure her that it is "most becoming"—and "everyone is wearing it."

Being quite unable to formulate any judgment of her own, the woman without taste permits herself to be decided "for." She accepts, she purchases, and she wears what has been recommended. In fact, she cannot help herself. She simply cannot tell what is her own peculiar style. She is ignorant how to make the most of "good points"—how to disguise bad ones; how to assist nature, instead of presenting its mistakes in the matter of shape or colouring as a glaring error and a personal affront. Such persons as these have no idea how to use Fashion. They only abuse it.

Very seldom, nowadays, are we presented with a style incapable of artistic modulations.

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The woman with good taste grasps the idea and then sets about planning its suitability to herself. Such a woman merely expresses a fashion. She never allows it to express *her*. She avoids exaggeration—crude or loud colours, too expensive or too restrained draperies, too floppy hats. She is never *noticeable*, though always noticed, simply because she is suitably attired.

The woman of good taste is specially careful in street dressing—that crucial test for fashionable or unfashionable women. Her gown is up-to-date, but more remarkable for good *cut*—for the way it delineates the figure—than for costliness of fabric, or eccentricity of style. Above all, she studies *detail*. Nothing clashes; nothing offends. From the becoming hat to the smartly shod foot all is simple, elegant, refined. No matter what she wears, be it cotton or brown holland, silk or muslin, cloth or tweed, the same quiet simplicity stamps them. She always looks *well* dressed because she is suitably dressed. Men's eyes invariably notice her. Women say, "How stylish!" or "How nice!"

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And yet wonder what it was that specialised her appearance and drew forth such comments.

It is in such a *toilette* as this that we discover the use of a fashion ; that we detect its subtle suggestions, and admire its graceful possibilities. We know that the woman we criticise is not an epitome of Jay's, or Paquin's, or Peter Robinson's ; not even the " latest Paris model " of the fashion papers—yet she is fashion and good style combined.

How is it done ?

If we are intimates we ask the price of such a *chic toilette*, and are amazed that it is compressed into quite reasonable limits. We take it to pieces and find no single item is really expensive. The effect is produced by the harmony of the whole ; by the graceful blending of colour or tint that symbolises it. By the way the hat suits the gown, the *tout-en-cas* suits the hat, the blouse blends with the skirt, and the boots and gloves finish off the other items.

Be the *toilette* that most suitable of all street costumes, black, or black and white, or

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plain dark grey, we cannot but admire its quiet elegance and wonder why our blues and greens and shrimp pinks and multitudinous laces, capelets and feather boas look so common beside it! Street dressing is an art, and an art very few English women possess. One reason is that they buy a dress mainly because it is the fashion, and buy it without regard for its manifold requirements. It must do for "best." It must do for church; for an At Home, for a garden party. The consequence is that it is "all things to all occasions" and suitable to none. It may be too loud for the streets, not distinctive enough for the At Home or the garden party; too noticeable for church, and quite unsuited for home use. A woman with a limited allowance for dress has to study all these points.

It is absurd for her to emulate the duchess, the Chicago heiress, and the millionaire's wife. Absurd to buy muslins and laces that won't stand a week's wear, or the washer-woman's considerate handling! Equally absurd to choose a very bright or remarkable colour, so

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hat her friends say, " Oh, I'm sick of that eternal gown of M—'s. Why didn't she get a quieter colour."

In fact, dressing is an art, and Fashion the headmistress of the academy of instruction. She paints a design or displays a model, then bids her pupils copy it. According to their skill or taste, or power of expression, so is their success. Some may try all their lives, and produce only absurdities or exaggerations. Others, with a touch, a turn, accomplish marvels; rivalling even the original design in beauty or effect.

There are many things in this weary world one would alter if one could. There are follies, inconveniences, and—fashions. Happy the man or woman gifted with the power of using the best and avoiding the worst of such manifold encumbrances.

Some of us go through life with leaden weights on our eyes; with dull brain, unsympathetic hearts. To such people Nature says as little as life, and they leave the world as blind and foolish as they entered it. They are blots on

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the landscape. They blunder through their duties, abuse their privileges, and make their own particular niche as ugly and in-harmonious as want of taste and tact are capable of making it.

WEALTH

IN the present day the mere possession of wealth is of no importance in comparison with its display. An unostentatious millionaire might as well live in the workhouse as in an unfashionable thoroughfare with few servants and no motor-cars for the use of his friends. For, be it well understood, it is for his friends and acquaintances that poor Croesus has to live up to the standard of extravagance and bewilderment that marks the special acceptance of Society.

Time was when that august body was synonym of all that stood for distinction. Time was when Park Lane could ignore even Grosvenor Square. For Park Lane signified that Holy of Holies, the aristocratic centre. It led the fashions without dictating them. Now it dictates without leading them.

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"*Autres temps, autres mœurs,*" says the proverb. The sheep of Society have no longer a distinctive shepherd. They stray here, there, and everywhere at their own sweet will, and do as seems good unto themselves. Sets and *cliques* take up or introduce fads and follies. They are lauded, copied, abandoned—Abused!

"Give us something new" is the cry of the day, and in the endeavour to satisfy that cry the would-be social leaders strain every nerve. They generally succeed in making themselves merely conspicuous—often ridiculous.

For Society has thrown wide its once exclusive portals to the parvenu, the wealthy tradesman, the notorious money-lender, and the South African and American millionaire. Not a few of the latter have grafted themselves on aristocratic stems, and with true democratic arrogance blossomed forth into an exclusiveness worthy of a democracy! They manifest the growth of a new progress—that of the Impertinence of Wealth; the

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power of ruling merely by a rod of gold. It is no longer "I bid you," but "I buy you." It matters not if you are well bred, high born, a genius, or a barbarian, Society offers you but one thing—a price. "I want your name at my parties; at the head of my board of directors. What will buy it?" Or, "I want your genius to astonish my guests. What is its fee?" Or, "You rule a great semi-barbaric nation, whose name I can't pronounce, but I want you in your native costume and all your jewels at my At Home. What do you ask?"

This is the modern style of "getting at people"; bribing or buying the presence of celebrities to dangle as a bait for acceptances not procurable by any other means. Unfortunately, celebrities are bribable, and genius too often spells impecuniosity. They permit their names to be dangled on the "fly-line," or paraded in the latest fashion on programmes, or printed before the R.S.V.P. of an invitation card. And they say to themselves, "Park Lane! Why, that is *the* aristocratic

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centre of London ! To be seen, to be heard *there*, means fame ! ”

It probably means nothing of the sort, save for the grasshopper existence of a season. But interpretation only follows experience. If there is magic in a name, there is equal magic in an address. The millionaire has discovered both facts, and knows how to trade on them. He cannot force recognition ; he cannot buy friendship ; he cannot even *always* succeed in bribing celebrity or genius, but it is not for want of means ; not for any reticence on his part in spreading the corruption of gold, or casting his fly-line with its glittering bait into every stream or tributary that takes his fancy.

Sometimes the millionaire leaves social matters to his wife, if by happy chance he has secured a clever one. Before very long she has fathomed the mysteries of Wealth. It is a word to conjure with, a badge of influence ; a pseudonym for social notoriety. She has learnt that you must never seem afraid of Society. Even great

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houses have skeletons in their cupboards, and a judicious hint has been known to work wonders. Let people know that you have nothing to fear from them, but that they, on the other hand, have a good deal to fear from you, and they are at your feet. If they won't come to your house for your own sake, have someone there for whose sake they would—well, make even *that* sacrifice. Kindred unities, conservatories, alcoves, lavish suppers, a discreet tongue—all these have their uses. All help to keep aristocratic impertinence within bounds. In time they will permit of impertinence on the millionairess's own part; of a launching forth of the good ship Confidence, and a safe voyage through smooth and sunny seas.

There is still another method of making Society take you up. You can discover a prodigy; be godmother to a budding genius, or indeed a flock of geniuses and prodigies. Heaven knows they are plentiful enough nowadays!

It is a great matter to acquire a reputation for

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"the best dinners," but it is no mean triumph to found an equally valuable reputation on "the latest genius." Besides, it gives an artistic position that brings down the notice of really exclusive people—even of Royalty. Poor self-sacrificing Royalty, that must pay the penalty of "Divine rights," and can never be entertained as an "angel unawares" !

Music is an admirable card to play in the game of social notoriety. Of course, it is expensive at first. But once let the profession know that yours is the one house in all London where it is *the* thing to be first heard, or first seen, and the rest is easy. You can pick and choose your celebrities. Agents will inform you of every new genius, of every Continental success. To arrive in London means that *you* can claim the introduction and the introducing. If your fledgeling artist becomes world-famed, you have still a claim on his gratitude, and while he may ask a hundred guinea fee for a solo anywhere else, he must come to your house and play at your parties for—nothing.

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The discovery and advertising of young genius is indeed one of the special impertinences of wealth. Sometimes the godmother of a celebrity is really a benefactress. But there are exceptions. Often she only bores people with his virtues, his biography, and his indebtedness to—herself. She lays claim to his gratitude with a supreme forgetfulness of her own debt to his "genius. She fastens upon him the lasting fetters of obligation, and would fain parade him to the world as the conquerors of old paraded their captives. She grudges his achievements, even while she profits by them. She would like to keep him to herself, and yet have all the world acknowledge his talent. She wants not only to be his sponsor, but the keeper of his conscience and his heart. If he makes new friends she is annoyed. If he travels she is uneasy. If he marries she declares his career is at an end. Her own selfishness would invariably step between his art and his affections, holding both because of what she terms a "prior claim."

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At such houses as these, celebrities come and go, and geniuses are born into fame, with each succeeding season.

Yet there are many less creditable ways of spending money than by assuming the sponsorship of art. If only such sponsors could be convinced that they really are debtors instead of benefactors, it would be still more to their credit. For no wealth can buy genius, any more than it can buy love. Both are the free gifts of those Fates who rule men's lives ; both should be served on bended knees, and revered as a religion. When Wealth comes along, a bloated power weighted by money-bags, and says, with pretentious insolence, "I will trade with you," it shows itself merely as bargainer, usurer, tempter. It is not a true benefactor, and lays no claim to a gratitude enforced. Let the millionaire dower Art for art's sake, and the world will be the better for his millions. But it should never suffer his assertions and his patronage to burden it with obligation. He should be servitor, not ruler. A humble worshipper, not a boastful autocrat.

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There are houses in London and Paris, grave and dignified, and splendid, speaking of past generations and of ancient titles. There are others, shouldering them, so to say, out of place ; big with pretension, brazen with effrontery ; staring and glittering as only the new millionaire's palace can stare and glitter. From the latest thing in door-knockers to the highest art in decoration they are obtrusive. The window-boxes spell a small fortune to the horticulturist, and the window-blinds are a triumph of millinery. The insignia of wealth is emblazoned from basement to attic ; on dinner-plate and book-plate alike ; on marble staircase as on area rails.

Money is buying out the old time-honoured leases ; the once aristocratic dwelling-places. In their place comes the pretension of the new plutocracy, the show, fuss, extravagance and display of Wealth. Old ways, old rules, old traditions, are pushed aside as of no account. Money seeks self-advertisement as well as self-advantage. The plutocrat cannot understand that a shabby carriage and an unostentatious

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residence may be of a thousandfold more significance than his prancing horses, his latest motor, or all his gilt, marble, and bronze.

He cannot understand that though money makes the man, it cannot make the gentleman; that good breeding and high lineage are born with one, even as is genius. He cannot understand that effrontery is not merely "holding one's own"; that slang is *piquante*, or vulgar, according to the speaker; that of all the trials of modern life the trial of putting up with the self-made plutocrat is the hardest.

Year after year Society comes to its pageants, its social duties, its functions and obligations; and year by year it is faced by the impertinences and exaggerations of its new rival—Wealth. Once it could rule by weight of its own influence, now it is ruled by weight of ominous millions. Money buys our ancient homes, our ancient titles, and lowers their standard of exclusiveness. Money dictates a fashion in dress, or an eccentricity in entertaining. Money motors the old-fashioned

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carriage aside into by-lanes, and carries off our sons and daughters in a palatial steam yacht. Money lends these same sons and daughters the stakes for Bridge, or "puts them on" the winner at Ascot. Money bribes away the poor aristocrat's *chef*, and bargains for his picture gallery. Money is ousting all that was exclusive and gracious and dignified from Society, and replacing them with vulgarity and show. Its power is felt on all sides.

The old word "aristocrat" has no meaning save for the select few who still try to uphold the old traditions; to whom hospitality is not a mere byword for display, and in whose salons modern impertinences play no part. To quote Goldsmith is to pronounce oneself old fashioned. Yet some lines of his were prophetic—

"How wide the limits stand,
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from the shore."

"Shouting Folly" and "freighted ore"!

• WEALTH

Had wise and gentle Oliver some prescience of a future such as the twentieth century heralds when to "him that hath Wealth," all else shall be given, and—forgiven?

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THE MARRIAGEABLE AGE

It occurred one day to a certain editor of a certain brilliant little journal, that it would be worth while to find out from women what they considered a suitable age for matrimony.

Forthwith he summoned them to use of pen and paper, and let loose upon a delighted world of readers a variety of opinions on this important subject.

To my mind sprang the involuntary answer: "A woman should marry at any age she finds a suitable man willing to marry *her*."

A few maiden ladies of doubtful years took this retort in very ill part. They appeared to think it cast a slur upon feminine dignity. The dignity of sex, the dignity of voluntary spinsterhood, which only remains

THE MARRIAGEABLE AGE

"spinsterhood" because it chooses, not because it must.*

The idea of a man being willing to marry *her*, forsooth! It was the other way about. Would she be willing to marry *him*?

Is he, as a rule, worth the sacrifice of her liberty and her person? Are her married friends to be so greatly envied that she need fret at single blessedness for her portion? What is man, after all, but a selfish tyrant, a being whose use in the world is really doubtful, seeing that women can do everything he can, and do it very much better—in their own opinion!

And so on.

Perhaps she was right. Spinsterhood is an honourable estate, equally with that of marriage, and women are wise in postponing the "fatal step" until they are quite sure it is worth taking. Still, marriage is a factor in the world's history, and has to be considered seriously. So, all said and done, we may as well discuss the subject from the editor's as well as the spinster's point of view, and ask

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ourselves at what age it is best for a woman to marry?

Certainly she should not marry too young. Four or five-and-twenty is a sensible age. At sixteen or seventeen she probably thinks only of the romantic side of the question, and romance and marriage never have joined, and never *will* join hands for a lifetime.

The girl has no standpoint from which to consider a man, save that of her own home circle. The "other man" outside it takes good care to display only his best qualities. Selfishness, bad temper, and eccentricity are purely fireside virtues. The lover, or the engaged man, does not display them in advance. It would be premature to wreck happiness—or its mirage—at the outset of "life together." Life together being the usual title of romance, and the too-frequent dirge of its finale.

Parents usually wish their daughters to marry young, and to marry well. They know (mothers especially) that years have a tendency to develop the critical faculty. It is always

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best for a girl to marry *before* and a woman to marry *after* the development of this faculty. It saves trouble.

To be really happy in marriage a girl of eighteen should marry a man of forty-five who is devotedly in love with her. He will give her adoration and protection—and if suitably possessed of this world's goods will delight in lavishing wealth and service in her honour. But the girl will probably turn away from middle-aged devotion and crave for some impetuous and good-looking youth, who has nothing of the husband's plodding virtues or generosity to distinguish him.

These cases meet one so often in the book of life and the records of the Divorce Court that they carry their own moral.

Therefore, judging by experience, girls prefer to marry young, to marry romantically, and to feast on "apples of Sodom" in secret bitterness as a result of their own self-will.

Yet nothing in life is quite so absurd as the endeavour to fix a rule, or a set of rules, for the guidance of marriageable humanity.

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In almost every instance marriage is the one action in a chequered career where the individual insists upon entire freedom of will. It is the concern of two persons against the united control or experience or advice of the whole world ! “ *We* ”—that word of wonder to lovers !—“ we choose to do this thing and abide by the consequences.” And they do it, and, as a rule, the consequences prove too much for *them*.

If marriage could only be freed from the inevitable selfishness of personal feeling it would be quite easy to fix a time and season for accepting it—such an age for the woman, and such an age for the man.

Our foreign neighbours have tried to do this, and so successfully that the habit seems to have lapsed into a national obligation.

Dr. Bernard Hollander has informed us that foreigners do too much to bring about marriage, and English people too little.

Except in the highest circles of society, the English do not interfere too peremptorily with the choice of their sons and daughters, and

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this, although the British race is supposed to be cold, prosaic, and unromantic in comparison with that of France, or Spain, or Italy.

Where a foreign marriage is concerned the real importance of the subject centres in the dowry. The British parent, on the other hand, is almost grateful to the chivalrous individual who offers to relieve him of the duty of supporting his daughter. It is possible that she may not be making a "good match," but, in any case, there will be one mouth less to feed; one dressmaker's bill less to pay.

Results and consequences are for the rash voyagers on matrimony's troubled sea.

So, to ask at what age should a woman marry is an attempt at overthrowing a national prejudice in favour of the fool-hardiness that tempts sixteen and sixty with equal force. In any case, if a woman marries too young, or too old, she will equally wish at some time of her life that she had never married at all!

But it would be useless to tell her so. The unknown has charms beside which all else looks cold prose. To adventure to a new

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world, to face a new experience—these act as a temptation at least once (sometimes oftener) in a woman's lifetime.

The new world may prove as dull and dreary and unlovely as the old, the new experience may mean only a new heartbreak. Still, she will persist in experiments, and set common-sense and rules of decorum at defiance.

At what age should a woman marry? The question reminds me of a story of two maiden sisters.

One was seventy-five; the other seventy-two.

Said a male friend to the younger: "Can you tell me when a woman gives up the idea of a husband?"

The blushing septuagenarian glanced coyly at the interrogator.

"Perhaps you had better ask my sister," quoth she.

This is an instance of the folly of making arbitrary laws with regard to a marriageable age. For the feminine age is just an inclination.

THE YOUTH OF TEMPERAMENT

THRICE-BLESSED gift is this of Youth that knows not age and refuses to acknowledge its obligations! How it enjoys, how it *rackets*, how it revels in folly and absurdity until—well, until a stronger force even than age compels its attention!

In the present day the Youthful Temperament is much to the fore, notably amongst women. After long suppression woman has declared and inaugurated her independence. She waves her flag of defiance in the face of her natural foe Man. She flings her time-worn shackles to the winds, and in the buoyant, delicious gaiety of freedom she has become that giddy, brilliant thing beloved of Society journalists, who never weary of chronicling her doings, and sayings, and dress, and assur-

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ing her she looks as young and sprightly as her own great-granddaughter !

The Youthful Temperament is a magician that defies age. It refuses to exceed a mild thirty-five until Time suddenly and rudely checks it with fourscore—and a tombstone !

It is frisky, smart, up to date in everything. It keeps the world spinning to a hundred vagaries, fads, and fancies. It maintains that enjoying life is the best means of living it, and proves that youth is less a matter of youth than it is of temperament. For temperament excuses not only the way we live, but the absurdities we commit.

Some people are born young, and some are born old. The one class never seem to achieve anything save a gay irresponsibility in all matters concerning existence. The other is staid and gloomy and despondent, from childhood onwards. What the one lacks the other emphasises, and, by rule of contrast, the light and joyous temperament ~~lays~~ a higher claim to popularity. Smiles

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are always more pleasing than frowns, and to be approved, even by insincerity, is far more agreeable than to hear blunt and wholesome truths whose ultimate results we know, but refuse to acknowledge.

It is the temperament of youth that excuses even the follies of a grandmother, and permits respectable "fifty" to garb itself as romantic sixteen would scarcely dream of doing. From tight-lacing to henna-dyeing the frisky matron is a study in successful artifice. She defies social opinion, and turns herself out season after season with a brand-new picturesqueness that astonishes her friends and infuriates her enemies. That she should be tireless, gay, good-humoured, is an affront to staid years and appreciated responsibilities. But "Temperament" ignores responsibilities, and hence its perennial youth.

A woman learns from the Beauty Doctors and the confidential column of the Ladies papers that to frown or to worry, or to bother one's head about bills and families and housekeeping, is ruinous to a youthful

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complexion, and brings lines, wrinkles, and grey hairs. How truly wise are the writers of those confidential columns! How much women are indebted to them. No wonder they wore caps and took to "fronts" and matronly black silks before the lady journalist came to their rescue. But for her generous advice how should they know what to do when hair falls out or loses its glossy sheen; when complexions begin to fade, and figures to suggest an unbecoming prominence? When lines and wrinkles appear, and the eyes get "baggy," and amongst a multitude of dentrifications there seems no safety!

Oh, kind and clever lady journalist, who has evidently studied medicine and physiology, and even experimented on *herself* so as to benefit her sex and guide them into the path of obtainable Beauty! For, after all, the faculty of *feeling* young does not bestow youth or delay maturity. The joy of living may be intense, but it is quite possible to improve on its sensations by judicious *aids* to external appearance. So we have

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presented to us the kindly offices of beauty specialists who hint that artifice means only art. Art of a very high and superior kind—and price.

Twenty-five years ago it was almost impossible to find such a thing as an establishment for manicure. Now there is not a fashionable street or a country town without its professor. It is to America we owe its introduction, as well as that of its expensive fellow-artist the "Toilet Specialist"! And such artists have added greatly to the joy of feminine existence, for women can frankly accept and frankly acknowledge their services, and no one thinks any the worse of them for doing so.

Time was when to breathe of "make-up" was to be pronounced *déclassée*; when only one class of womanhood used it as an adjunct or—advertisement. But we have changed all that. A modern beauty makes no secret of "toilet aids," and has herself coloured, dyed, chin-strapped, figure-cultured, massaged, pedicured, manicured, corseted, and dressed

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by special artists in each line. Is it any wonder that she refuses to let Time play his insolent tricks upon such a work of self-preservation, and adapts her mind, morals, and manners to the juvenility of her appearance?

She acts her part so well that only very old—and undesirable—friends dare even insinuate she is approaching the border-line of maturity. Though she has daughters of twenty, or sons of thirty, she is still frisking, gambolling, coquetting; still to the front in all Society's abnormal enterprises; still dancing cotillions in the dawn of a summer morning; still enjoying late suppers, restaurant "feeds," motor "spins," Bridge "gambles"; still revelling in the turbulent element of "smart" entertainments; and still betraying in desultory and agitated fashion that youthful temperament which is at once cause and excuse of all social extravagances!

Happy temperament which refuses to be judged by arbitrary rules of right and wrong, which treats its debts as lightly as its maternal

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responsibilities, and refuses to believe in the existence of "worry."

Yet to be by nature gay and good-humoured is no unenviable attribute of either sex. The world will always prefer a smiling face to a gloomy one; a jest to a warning; praise to advice, and flattery to truth. The youthful temperament has made a study of pleasant things, and is generous in their administration. Care cannot touch nor criticism offend it. It is so airy, so flippant, so elusive that it can afford to laugh at uncomfortable emotions, and dance gaily over the thin ice of reputation.

Does Nemesis ever visit the possessor of this artistic temperament?—for indeed it is artistic in its method of providing its own brilliant setting and living up to other people's beneficence. Does the "dark hour" and the "rainy day" and the "long lane," and all the other well-croaked burdens of prophecy, ever throw a shadow of doom over its primrose path? If so it keeps its secret well, and gives the world no clue to a hiding-place where such exigencies demand retirement.

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Novelists have drawn tragic pictures of this temperament, facing lost hours, or last ones; standing amidst the crumbling ruins of life and honour, of beauty and self-respect; yet clinging desperately to some shred of pretence, trying to prove even to itself that a wasted life is less the fault of the individual than the nature it has inherited or acquired. The Joy of Living pleads excuse for the methods of life, and if it cannot solve the riddle of existence it thinks it quite possible to justify it by leaving a moral example of avoidance as its sole legacy.

It has been truly said that virtue is seldom amusing and never well dressed.

That is because virtue is old-fashioned enough to attend to its duties, cultivate simple pleasures, and is in favour of paying its debts. It does not "go in" for temperament. Frequently it finds no difference between it and downright wickedness. Of course it would not be polite to say so, and it therefore falls back upon the trite formula of exceptions. Not all light-hearted people are bad—and extravagant and immoral. Some are very

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generous, and even very forgiving. If they seem to have an eye to the main chance, and a nice discrimination in the matter of useful acquaintances, that is not to say they are equally incapable of approving merit. Only, merit pays so badly, and has to wear imitation pearls, and get its fashions second hand! A blameless existence is no doubt a fine thing to hand down to posterity, but it is a very tedious and chilly business to live up to. A chequered past, on the other hand, by aid of temperament—and judicial assistance—is by no means to be despised. It has been even known to achieve distinction. Men only ignore what is insignificant. The Youthful Temperament is never that. It is always to the fore. A laughing, bubbling, boisterous reminder that it expects to be taken at its own valuation.

Amongst bores and boredom the Youthful Temperament drops like a stone in a stagnant pool. It disturbs the depths, it sets the ripples flying into wider and wider circles. It insists upon being noticed, it

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cajoles, and flutters around, the dullest antagonist to mirth. It laughs not only for itself but for him or her who affects no mirth, and sees no humour in life. It will not be crushed or withstood. It praises everything, delights in everything, and sees only one side of existence—the best and brightest. “Silly,” “shallow,” “pretentious,” say the bores. But the Temperament cares not; heeds not; stops at nothing. A fig for dignity, for repose; for accuracy of information respecting social misdemeanours—dangerously allied to libel! Amusement it must get at any cost; and when life ceases to amuse it is time for the chloral and the easy-chair, the dressing-gown and slippers, and that “good-night” to all it has clung to so long, which, however long deferred, must at last be said.

Happy Temperament if it finds even in the darkened room and the world-forgotten solitude one last attitude for mirth—Itself.

THE INCREASE OF VULGARITY AMONGST WOMEN

WHEN the term "smart" came into fashion, it probably had its significance for those concerned. The dictionary gives the varied meanings of the word as "acute, pertinent, vivacious, witty." So one may suppose a woman can take her choice of any of these complimentary adjectives and exemplify it in her own person.

Who first set the fashion of "smartness" may have been, and probably was, quite innocent of any intention to harm or vulgarise that august body yclept Society. Yet good intentions have frequently pioneered bad results, and so smartness has degenerated into a condition of extravagance, insolence, and vulgarity. The manners and conversation of women are more noticeable for the two last-named qualifications than for the wit or *esprit*

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originally intended. Slang terms and risky allusions are plentifully besprinkled throughout modern conversation. To be quiet, well-mannered, or, as our grandmothers would say, "lady-like," is to be laughed at as old-fashioned or frumpish. Women have entered the race with man, and challenged him by direct or indirect means to do anything that they cannot do likewise. They follow him on the moor, the river, the sea, the racecourse, the golf links, and the motor-car. They gamble, they bet, they smoke, they drink, they have their own private "dens" for the transaction of business with their pet stockbrokers; their own telephones and private wires. They lecture on the public platform, they invade the dissecting-room and the surgery.

The only professions remarkable for their absence are the Bar and the Church. The only trade—the butcher's. In the Church, however, their influence is often of paramount importance—they rule the parish if not the pulpit.

It is not my object, however, to prove that women are unfit for any of these offices, or un-

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worthy of entering the ranks of any profession, art, trade, or pastime that seems good unto them. What they feel able to do, or can qualify themselves for accomplishing, they are perfectly right to attempt. But it is the *effect* of these unfeminine occupations that I wish to speak about. And by effect I mean the deterioration in manners, habits, mode of speech, and appearance that is so plainly evident in modern women.

It has been argued that, physically, women have gained much by out-of-door exercise and sports — by gymnastics, tennis, golf, cycling. Certainly we are now favoured with a race of young giantesses whose walk and carriage set all laws of grace and dignity at defiance, and whose size in boots and gloves would not disgrace a Policeman! To whom gun, rod, tennis-bat, golf-stick, and the last disastrous craze — motoring — appeal more strongly than any domestic or feminine duty. For art they care little, and understand less. At the duties of marriage and maternity—for

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which their sex was certainly created—they openly scoff. A man who can give them a yacht, or a moor, or a fifty h.p. motor-car might possibly be put up with as a husband, but, for choice, they would prefer sharing these good things at some convenient friend's expense, and being "pally" with the said friend's particular lord and master.

The racecourse and card-table have also their *quota* of the woman of the century. The one shows her as a "knowing card," with an eye for a good thing, a reckless bribery of "tips," and a fund of slangy, horsy talk that would do credit to any jockey, not to say black-leg, on the course. The other displays this same "twen-cent." production as ready to gamble all night regardless of debts owing for her toilettes, her household, or her own extravagant fancies. Very often her debts of honour (save the name!) are far too heavy for her personal exchequer. Then some convenient male friend is applied to, and discharges them for an agreed—equivalent. In this manner does feminine instinct lose its pre-

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ordained delicacy, and gradually but surely deteriorate.

It is true there have always been bad women, reckless women, unscrupulous women, but surely never in such numbers or so brazenly conspicuous as in our present-day Society. The journals printed for their edification teem also with paragraphs of insolent familiarity, where their dress and doings and sayings are publicly announced, and in which they figure under the pet names given them by their "set." They have permitted the effrontery of journalism to reach a point bordering on licence, and they glory in the accounts of their gowns, their jewels, their scandals, and their eccentricities (to put it mildly), as they would never glory in the performance of any good, simple, womanly action.

The craze for notoriety, of seeing oneself chronicled as a "somebody," has had the effect of vulgarising Society to a fearful extent. Every woman wants to be noticed or remarked for something, be it only the wearing of one

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earring instead of two, the establishment of a titled tea-shop, or the pretence of improving her fellow-sister's appearance by toilet trickery such as massage, or skin rejuvenation.

In all this the craze for notoriety speaks clarion-tongued, and it is for this same notoriety that the many senseless fads of Society are responsible. But the restless, insolent *mondaine* of to-day forgets that she has one taskmaster she cannot evade, one Nemesis whose vengeance is bound to overtake her heedless steps sooner or later. And the Taskmaster and the Avenger bear the same name—Nature.

Had Nature intended woman to be an exact or exaggerated copy of man she would have constructed her on totally different lines. If woman rigorously sets herself to be a male counterpart, then in time she will also become coarse of skin, rough-voiced, moustached, ungraceful, and unpleasing. Slang and smoke, noise and dissipation, an over-trained physique and a disorganised intelligence will obliterate the grace and beauty and refine-

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ment, we have loved to associate with the word—woman. Instead of being the centre of home-life, she is now the noisy, slangy, indecent, and impertinent creature who is the idol of “smartness,” and the jest of club-rooms.

Public or private remonstrance has no effect on women of this type. They are trained on lines of exaggeration. Everything that is not sensational is “deadly slow.” Excitement is the very breath of life to them and their set. Simplicity or good taste in dress is to write oneself down a “dowd.” To load oneself with jewels, to scream with laughter at half-veiled indecencies that pass current for wit, to live perpetually in a crowd, never to be shocked, never to be tired, never to be seen with one’s husband (save at a royal ceremony), to have heaps of men always about ready to pay one’s cabs, one’s florist, and take one to matinée luncheons and theatre suppers—this is to be a “smart” woman of to-day; the envied of less advertised and less prominent social luminaries.

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What such a life means to any thinking person is appalling. Not only is it an offence to good taste and decency, but it is the utter destruction of womanly dignity and womanly honour. It means a future for the sons and daughters of the "smart" woman that is a terror to contemplate. For to woman belongs the responsibility of possible generations. Maternity is not an accident but a design. The man who gives his children a bad mother is an offender against Nature's highest law. If she be pure, honest, gentle, true, so much the stronger will be her influence at home, and her power over the immature minds she should delight to train.

To leave a child to the entire care of strangers is to demoralise its early memories, and stunt its young affections. Yet this is a crime daily and hourly committed. Committed, too, without thought and without care. A woman who lives for Society, for excitement, for the perpetual distractions of the gay world, has no time and less inclination to attend to her children. She gives them hired service and

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hired affection. If they are pretty or picturesque she has them brought to her boudoir on At Home days, or drives with them in the crowded Park on chance occasions. Nurses, governesses, and tutors do all the rest until that dreaded time when their age demands notice, and clashes with her own would-be youthfulness.

Once the term "fast" was a stigma of shame to a woman—now it is her glory! The modern smart woman is not even content with so tame an epithet. She desires to be called "rapid." She leaves good manners and good breeding to fogies and "dowds." She must see and be seen from morning till night. She must do everything that is decreed to be *chic*—no matter how silly, or extravagant, or dangerous. For manners she has "cheek"; for conversation endless chatter and the latest thing in slang; for accomplishments sport; and for dignity impudence. It is so easy to be rude and personal and noisy. To play practical jokes and relate stories only fit for the smoking-room! Prudery

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is at a discount, and relegated to the middle-classes, or the poor despised workers who toil in hot rooms and fashionable shops that their cultured sisterhood may be clothed sumptuously for the glorification of vanity, and the ensnaring of man ! •

Yet, to those who look below the brilliant bubbles of social life, it would seem that to this half-despised and ignored middle-class will England owe her salvation. The worker's hand steadies the helm that the palsied grasp of Fashion would turn to its own destruction. Far below the frothy whirlpool of frivolity lie the calm, deep waters of common-sense, that saviour and bulwark of national integrity. It may be rough, it may be stormy, it may boldly flaunt the naked truth in a style unfit for dainty dames whose *risqué* jests must wear at least a pretence of French veiling ; but it is at least honest, and carries in its train much that the great world needs—much that it has destroyed and denied.

Good breeding is not of necessity confined to descendants of great names. But such

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descendants have no excuse for pillorying its traditions at the bidding of Fashion.

Race and rank alike have their obligations. It is unwise as well as criminal to evade them. A great name is as a great light set on high. If it is dimmed by neglect or extinguished by folly the loss concerns many who have looked up to it for guidance. No man's life can be lived to and for himself alone, and the higher his position, the more exalted his rank, so much the greater are his responsibilities.

It has been said that the decadence of chivalry in men has had a corresponding decadence in womanly virtues. But women themselves are to blame for permitting such decadence.

If they choose to become a smoke-room or stable companion to a man, he very naturally treats them to the manners and language such a companion deserves. There is a very short step between liberty and licence, and that step women have allowed men to take. The results are only too apparent to the dispassionate observer. To

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drink or smoke with male companions was in the early part of the past century relegated to those questionable characters with whom men spent their hours of rowdyism. Nowadays it is quite the usual thing for cigars, cigarettes, and liqueurs to conclude a dinner-party before the ladies leave the table, and to see them smoke and drink with all the zest of their male companions. That such habits do much to destroy feminine charm is, unfortunately, too true. If a woman once loses her innate sense of what is refined or delicate, she seems unable to stop her downward progress.

Not so long ago the Press teemed with statistics showing the increase of women drunkards, and not—sad to say—among the lower classes, but in the highest and most aristocratic circles. Doctors of eminence and note have given reluctant testimony to this disastrous state of things, and even the most optimistic of individuals cannot look forward without dread to the possible consequences of this habit. The perpetual strain

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on brain and nerve, the perpetual effort to seem alert, tireless, and amusing, is a fearful tax on the energies of social beauties and celebrities. So they seek the aid of pick-me-ups, of "nips," of stimulants of all sorts and at all seasons. A Society doctor recently declared that the number of women from nineteen to forty years of age whom he had attended for ailments caused by alcoholic excesses, far exceeded that of men. And excesses of this sort have a much worse effect upon women than upon men, and are far more difficult to cure. Once a woman loses her finer sense of shame she loses all that might reclaim her. And she has lost so much of it in these latter days that one is scarcely surprised at the senseless whims, the reckless extravagance, the audacious, noisy self-advertisement for which she is remarkable.

Literature has been coarsened by her contributions, and men are more often ashamed of her boldness than appreciative of her skill. In her hands realism reaches a point hard to define, but certainly a point that

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makes one wonder from what source or by what means she has secured her information. Many of the modern woman's books are not edifying; neither are they distinguished for literary merit. The increase of feminine writers has been anything but a boon. It has cheapened literature and overcrowded the market. Above all, it is responsible for the floods of trashy, penny novelettes which decoy the coppers of a class of readers who would be much better without the false view of life, and false sentiment contained in their pages.

Here, again, woman is the offender, and though she may write rubbish for a living, one feels inclined to point out very many other ways of securing independence. For silly and misleading books are only another mode of vulgarising taste and lowering the standard of thought and appreciation. And as by deed, and word, and thought women degenerate in the scale of civilised life, so also will man ignore her influence and avoid instead of admire her. She may assert she cares nothing for his neglect, and less for

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his admiration. She is so advanced and so independent that she can do perfectly well without him !

Then by all means let her avoid paying him so poor a compliment as that of imitation, and cease to masquerade in his vices and mistakes.

THE SUBURBAN CRITIC OF MORALS

IN the cheerful seclusion of a suburban villa, in the cheap, "artistically"-furnished front sitting-room with its inevitable suburban decoration of flower-pot and plant in the window, the critic of Society and its morals sits and moralises.

The critic is generally of the feminine persuasion—a lady who loves her *Modern Society* and her illustrated fashion journals; who is *au fait* with the names, titles, and inter-marriages of Royalty and the Peerage; and who has an At Home day, when she entertains her friends with such social problems as the iniquities of servants, and the latest scandal of the divorce court.

Suburbia, in fact, is the severest censor of morals that we possess.

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It is near enough the "rose" to scent its fragrance, and far enough removed to own a slight olfactory confusion respecting the identical perfume it has detected. Also Suburbia is very confident as to the wickedness and general immorality of "High Sassiety!" There is something very delightful about its simple acceptance of facts which can never be satisfactorily proved, something at once rebuking and instructive in its criticism of men, women, and morals; for Suburbia has achieved distinction by reason of severe integrity specially concerned with the seventh commandment. Its husbands are also excellent family men who rarely miss a train, who would never think of "grass bachelorhood" as a suitable holiday, who pay the school bills of the children and the dressmaking accounts of their wives with commendable punctuality, if little ardour. Who look upon Sunday as a day to go to church itself, instead of its "Parade." Who, in fact, are essentially domestic and essentially virtuous.

Therefore, is Suburbia privileged to sit in judgment on others, whose qualifications

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for good deeds and good example are only disqualified by invertebrate indifference!

It naturally appears to this critic that an ability to be virtuous on £400 a year should increase with the possession of £4000. The delightful fact of owning a large income must surely mean larger opportunities of well doing. The critic of Suburbia argues without any knowledge of the world as the world is known to the worldly-minded. For, be its faults great or small, Suburbia is *not* worldly-minded—except at second-hand. As a rule it is born and bred to narrow limitations.* It is incapable of soaring above them. To minds concerned with an error in the "pence" column of the weekly accounts, the task of balancing pounds and shillings to adequate expenditure of the same, seems a sheer impossibility.

Suburbia has fortunately been placed in a position that need not reckon with social temptations. For this reason it has appointed itself their judge and their critic. It is always so easy to see how wrong and wicked other

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people are; notably those set on high, and facing the fierce light that beats upon their actions with the superb indifference of a Quidaesque Guardsman! Suburbia could not possibly place itself in the position of the said Guardsman because it has inherited the good, serviceable, middle-class qualities of the middle classes. That the said class is England's backbone and strength and stay no sane legislator would deny. Its virtues are not only self-produced but prerogative. There it stands in English history, stolid, sober, well ordered, well meaning. Fed on traditions and ready to uphold them; narrow perhaps, but oh, so *good*, so worthy!

Now Society can lay but little claim to these homely virtues. It would be rather offended if such terms were applied to itself as a body, or to its actions as a result. In fact, for some reason best known to itself, Society—as reckoned by the untrammelled, unembarrassed “Ten Thousand”—has always chosen to appear rollicking, unsteady, reckless; indifferent to opinion, private or public. Sufficient for

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itself and the "evil thereof," and highly amused at the lower or middle-class affront of criticism, which seemingly is but further proof of the inability of one class to judge another. Each has a monopoly of virtues—or vices—peculiar to itself. Each scoffs, or sneers at, or pities what it is unable to comprehend.

Religious differences and social differences are two subjects set for ever apart from *universal* agreement.

Their very existence proclaims a necessity for controversy; their issues are far-reaching and divergent. One religious body can no more comprehend another than can a child of the slums understand the shibboleth of modern conversation! The words and ways of a class to whose habits we are unaccustomed are always more or less puzzling. Therefore when Suburbia sits with stony face glowering over a Duchess' expenditure, or a Duke's morals, or a Millionaire's extravagance, or a highly-spiced scandal, it would do well to remember that there is such a thing as tempta-

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tion. Also a mental infirmity peculiar to *all* classes called "moral weakness."

Even Suburbia has displayed this regrettable infirmity on occasions. There have been scandals at Balham and Bayswater as well as in Park Lane and Piccadilly. And while the Mrs. Grundy of the suburbs holds up hands of horror at the paragraphed wickedness of frail and lovely peeresses, she would do well to remember that she, the queen of moral and modest womanhood, has never been subjected to the temptations which her less fortunate sister has had to encounter. To be born into a "set" is less a privilege than it may seem. Wealth and titles, honour and position have large attendant responsibilities.

Marriage, in English Society, is frequently a matter of arrangement, as in France; and even Suburbia might acknowledge that to a woman a loveless home and empty heart are very unenviable possessions. Duty is a harsh taskmaster, and a woman's chances of happiness are often brief as her youth. The

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need of love is imperative. Nature has made it so.

A life without love is barren as a desert. The call of the heart demands and sometimes creates an answer. If that answer is unwise, so much the worse for the seeker! Sympathy is a subtle force, but sympathy too has its danger. It disarms the citadel of virtue ere virtue is conscious of its entrance beyond the outermost gates. The rest is a mere question of time, or—opportunity.

Then the world is scandalised and shocked, and sinners and saints alike crowd to the judgment seat to pass sentence on the crime of "discovery." Without discovery Society would run on in its own sweet way as long as seemed to it desirable. But unfortunately a censorship of morals does exist, and it cries "Thus far and no further" even to those in High Places.

The world was not specially created for the good or the wicked. Each serves to leaven the qualities of the other. Each supplies a need. It is only by contrast

that we seem virtuous or vile. Our actions have a certain determinating effect on the minds or characters of others. If all were good the opportunity of performing praise-worthy actions would be wanting. If all were evil, there would be no place for criticism. Immorality would be accepted as the natural outcome of human infirmities, and in all probability grow insignificant as a result of sheer want of contrasting effects !

It is those contrasting effects which are happily supplied by the puritanical, the narrow-minded, and the self-righteous. A grey sheep holds its neutral tint as spotless beside a veritable black one, and thus do the useful, sober "grey lives" of Suburbia stand forth in contrast to the brilliant scarlet—and soot—of its Social Sisterhood.

"I am not faultless myself," affirms Mrs. Clapham-Common with becoming humility, "but I do draw the line at——" well, whatever is the good lady's special tint of impropriety. In like manner do her sisters of town suburbs north or east of the Park affirm their

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predilections, and affix their signatures of censorship. Yet how little are either capable of judging did they but know what lies behind the scenes. The charity of the world is far removed from that sort which "thinketh long and is kind." As a rule the thinkers are quick-judging, narrow, and illogical. Furthermore, did one of those great ladies, upon whose appearance or actions they sit in judgment, condescend to stop her carriage by side of the hired victoria, condescend to leave a card on "Villadom," or offer Mrs. Suburbia a dinner at the Savoy or the Carlton, what would that good lady do?

Would she feel dishonoured by the recognition or the invitation, or would she return to her "artistic drawing-room" and her india-rubber plant, and straightway summon her friends and neighbours and her most *distinguished* acquaintances and overwhelm them with descriptions of dear "Lady So-and-So's" cordiality. Speak of the Carlton, not as an instituted meeting-place for "smart sinners,"

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but a Mecca of purity for the simple and pure of heart!

If social sinners were as wise as—often— they are frail, they would recognise that their best policy lay in winning the favour of Suburbia, instead of ignoring its existence. They would whitewash themselves by an occasional call, or card, or invitation, and so go down to “paragraph” fame as spotless as snow—London snow! But then Society does not trouble itself one whit as to whether the world outside its own particular “set” thinks well or ill of its vagaries. Of course Suburbia would not believe this; would never credit that its opinions—originating from the moral centre of England—were unimportant to Society, even the highest.

“Good” people take a great deal of convincing. They never credit other folk with virtues less openly proclaimed than are their own, and the habit of judging by appearances is almost as deeply rooted as faith in the social paragraphist. It also saves a great deal of trouble. For Suburbia cannot possibly know

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the real truth of what it criticises. It must of necessity get its facts at second-hand. But there is something at once interesting and instructive in self-appointed censorship.

It impresses Suburbia's acquaintances as easily as it misleads them. It creates the impression of a certain authorised familiarity with social facts and social celebrities. It makes At Home days quite a function instead of a bore, and it also lends a spurious importance to the suburban hostess.

Occasionally she tires of repeating or listening to stories of domestic grievances, the tiresome ways of husbands, the various illnesses of children, the iniquities of servants. But when does she ever tire of social scandals, or the doings and sayings of Belgravia and Mayfair?

• PART IV



THE AMAZING AMERICAN!

THE AMAZING AMERICAN!

I AM giving this Great Subject a place to itself. It is one quite impossible to classify or associate with the foregone "opinions."

Candidly speaking, I do *not* like Americans. I have met many, and read of many, and heard of many who might pass muster as favourable specimens, but, taken as a whole, I have an invincible prejudice against their manners, customs, vulgarity, language, accent, and—boastfulness. I have never been fortunate enough to meet an American gentleman or an American lady. Possibly they do not leave their own shores for this benighted, old-fashioned land of Britain,—possibly my opinion of what constitutes a gentleman or lady is not the typical American one!

Be that as it may, I venture to assert that it will take centuries of "refining" and of

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educating Before an American—even of the ultra-civilised Four Hundred—can claim equality with the English upper or middle classes. By equality I mean that distinction with which good-breeding and past traditions have dowered our more fortunate land.

The American nation is a hotch-potch of all other nations. The very dregs of Ireland and of Europe were poured into its seething pot of "democracy." Having so long gloried in that democracy, and re-christened it "Liberty," the American is hardly to blame if its results prove somewhat incomprehensible to more cultured races.

We are told that we should never judge of a country by its travelling "samples." If this rule holds good with the Englishman, the Scotsman, the Frenchman, and the German, how strictly should it be observed in criticising the habits and manners of the American!

If we are to judge of *him* by exported "samples," we feel confident that *his* country holds the undisputed right to be proud of such a production. No other nation would

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interfere with its prerogative ; for he is like nothing else in the wide world!

The travelling American, whether he be Yankee-bred, or Boston-reared, or Chicago-raised, is always prepared to criticise everything he sees from the standpoint of his own superiority. He has been reared from the nursery onwards with the one idea that he is the equal of any man on earth, and to that idea he clings as to a religious faith. At one stage of his unnatural existence he adds to this idea the conviction that he is superior to most. Thus equipped for the battle of life, he enters upon that stupendous career of Bounce, Brag, and Boastfulness which has made him world-famed and world-dreaded.

The ubiquitous American is not content to go anywhere simply as a traveller or a sightseer. Immediately he finds himself among other people he announces the fact of his nationality.

It is not necessary. His first word gives that away. But with a covert challenge to

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anyone better bred, or better mannered, he introduces his unimportant self, and enlarges upon his country, his politics, and his income.

That anyone can be rich, or titled, and yet perfectly unassuming, is a fact an American cannot comprehend. It will take centuries to instil that knowledge into him. He professes the utmost contempt for rank or birth, yet unaccountable acts of toadyism contradict his assertions. No one has so openly flattered and run after the possessor of titles as the American. No one has been more ready to sell herself, and bestow her dollars, than these so-called daughters of a democracy. The manner in which American women pursue any celebrity, dog the footsteps of Royalty, and pester and "worry" their way into select circles, is too well known to need description.

When the American invasion first began, we looked upon it with the indulgence and wonder a parent bestows upon a spoilt child. America is a young country, comparatively;

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and its children have all the faults and some of the virtues of youth. They are self-willed, arrogant, passionate, and foolhardy.

But these are minor faults in contrast to their insufferable conceit in themselves, and their overweening boastfulness. Self-advertisement seems the first law of nature to an American. He can never rest on his own merits, and allow other people to find out what he is, or what he does. He must immediately shout and advertise it. He will tell you the state of his health, the particular patent medicine he affects, the whole of his family history (with exaggerations), and the amount of dollars that make up his yearly income. In like manner the American girl frankly confides her intentions, her views of society, and her prospective "dot." I have seen her covered with diamonds in the morning, and wearing a semi-evening gown in the street as a "dress" advertisement of "Poppa's" dollars. She is quite unconscious of transgressing all canons of good taste by such proceedings.

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I mention these facts with due regard to "samples." I have heard that English women also do, and say, and—wear, strange things in strange countries.

Americans have a distorted idea of their own importance, and they carry that idea about with them on their travels for fear that the "Old Continent" should attempt to ignore their potential superiority. Bluff and push, noise and exaggeration—these are the methods best known and best loved of our dollared neighbours. Whatever they see is never so fine, so important, so money-making, nor so money-advertising as are American possessions, American inventions, and American delusions. They have come from a land of gigantic enterprises and preposterous possibilities—above all, a land of everlasting self-advertisement.

Not content with their own remarkable achievements, they are obstinately bent on foisting some of their atrocities on us. They have stormed our trade advertisements, disfigured our shop-windows with hideous "food-

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stuffs," unwearable shoes, and impossibly hygienic corsets! They have instilled the noble art of Braggadocio into our newspaper columns, and boomed unutterable trash as literature! They have flooded town and country with "Patent Foods" which are an insult to health and appetite, and introduced patent medicines that should only be used by "faith-dupes" and Christian Scientists! Happily there are a few sensible English-folk still living who refuse to add to the dollars of democracy by turning their digestive organs into troughs for husks and chaff, and such like "food-stuffs," only fitted for the poultry yard!

The American is nothing if not enterprising. He has done such wonders for his own country that it is quite grateful when he turns his attention to another—England for choice. The Continent fights shy of "'cuteness."

Who taught us that the true art of success was Advertisement? Loud advertisement; glaring, flaring, staring advertisement? *That* and nothing else, as a means of bullying

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and compelling notice? Who but the wily American, whose own streets, walls, fields and buildings are a hideous spectacle of the Poster's and Boaster's proficiency. They are the sole artists—and theirs the sole art for which the American has any genuine appreciation.

He is a born trader, as he is a born "bluffer." He cannot exist without a "deal" in some shape or form. Everything he has is for sale, and everything he sees only appeals to his instinct of buying or bargaining. Life—for him—is started on a basis of dollars, and carried on and carried forward at race-horse speed to the goal of millionairism. And even when that goal is reached he is not happy. He cannot rest quiet, or enjoy life in a cultured, leisurely fashion. He rushes over the face of the globe in the biggest of steam yachts over which the American flag can proudly float. He beats the big drum of boastfulness at every step of progress. He would like to engage only "Royal suites" at hotels, and have the waiters in Royal

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livery when they attend on him. He dresses his feminine contingent so expensively and outrageously that they are a positive eyesore to any woman of taste. And he "does" sight-seeing and travelling at express speed, because his whole previous existence has been the art of "bolting" everything that comes in his way; from a repast to a sensation; from the last crime of Wall Street to the frenzied banquet of convalescent appendicitists!

An American is never content to be introduced to anyone as plain "Mr. So-and-So"—even with the addition of a string of Christian names or initials. He wants it to be known that he is also the richest, or the "'cutest," or the most remarkable man in the special township honoured by his birth. He likes his introducer to add that the said "Mr. So-and-So" is *the* So-and-So of "Noo York City," or Chicago, or Philadelphia—as the case may be. That he owns so many million dollars; that he possesses several banks or railways, and a few dozen blocks of buildings! Then he will himself add who and what his wife was

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or is, from where she gets her dresses, and how many thousands of dollars-worth of diamonds are contained in her jewel-chest. .

An American cannot understand that it is considered very bad taste to say such things, or that to an English mind it sounds inexpressibly vulgar. He thinks he must assert and announce himself, or else he will be ignored. He has no refined instincts, no refined feelings, and assuredly no refinement of manners.

Yet one would not blame the poor man for these deficiencies if only he would allow that *they were* — deficiencies. That they are the fault of his unfortunate country, his own upbringing and education, his absolute inability to look upon poverty as anything short of a criminal offence! He cannot associate good birth with pride if its unfortunate possessor happens to be dollarless; nor can he understand that there are unostentatious English homes where he and his money-bags and his pretensions would never be admitted on any terms whatever.

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The American detests to be criticised—unfavourably.

Flattery and praise he will swallow for a lifetime, but an adverse opinion riles him beyond forgiveness. He has never pardoned Charles Dickens for what he said in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and he still tries to boycott any book or any writer that paint him and his doings in unfavourable colours. He is pachydermatous to everything save a candid expression of his own defects, or the idea that the world in general does *not* consider America the greatest and most wonderful country on the known globe! To him his nation and himself are above criticism. It is this blind and stupid boastfulness that arouses outside prejudices; that makes the "sample" American so general an object of ridicule and dislike on the Continent and in this country. For these "samples" are a positive offence to preconceived ideas of good taste, good manners, and good breeding.

I grant Americans are kind-hearted, hospit-

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able, and sometimes even generous with their accumulated dollars; but these are not assertive virtues like their boastfulness and exaggerations. Also, they are far rarer. Even the hospitality is tinged with egotism. A desire to show the unassuming Britisher how much better the American host (or hostess) can do everything for *him* than he has troubled or thought it worth while to do anything for his American friend.

All said and done, there is an instinctive antagonism between the two races. The English and the American, despite what has been said to the contrary, each in his secret heart dislikes or despises the other. The Englishman can better appreciate a Frenchman, or a German, or an Italian, than an American. He recognises in his foreign neighbours kindred virtues of refinement, culture, and good-breeding. In his American cousins he sees but the outrageous defects of the raw youth, the loud-voiced bully who wants "licking into shape." Indeed America's best excuse for

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its deficiencies is that of youth. It is a young nation, a nation of confused and mongrel breeds. A nation without hereditary traditions, or noble blood, or great history. A nation standing on a self-erected pedestal of importance, and clamouring like a spoilt child for incessant notice and admiration.

All its inventions, its crafts and its work, are done with a view of amazing the world at large rather than of beautifying or bettering itself. It has abolished the beautiful in architecture by hideous "skyscrapers" and monster hotels. It has destroyed peace and leisure of life, and replaced them by noise and clamour and "hustle." It grants no time to eat or drink or sleep, in the fashion that nature and rational life demand. It has no inner life and no rest; no art, and little literature worth the name. It tramples rough-shod on all the finer flowers of civilisation, and cultivates rough-and-ready weeds in their place. It considers "substitutes" as far 'cuter than any genuine produce. It would give people

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artificial meat and grain if only it could find a method of rearing artificial cattle and growing bogus wheat; and if such frauds were less liable to detection than its wooden nutmegs and its Tinned Abominations! To business an American brings little or no honourable feeling. He is impatient of steady and honest methods. He would sooner make one dollar by a trick, than *earn* a hundred by fair dealing. These are the very words spoken to me by a recently returned English friend who had spent fifteen years of "business" life in New York.

So, looked at dispassionately, the Amazing American is more an object for contempt than admiration; of wonder than of example.

If confined to his own limits, and left to his own evolution, one marvels what he would have become? But the influx of other life and other opinions and other hostilities have had a great deal to do with his destiny. He is a polyglot mixture of bloods and principles, of qualities and defects. He is a rough stem on which hundreds of enterprising gardeners

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have been grafting all sorts of cuttings. He has distinctive and surprising faculties for success and for the amassing of wealth, and yet he has only succeeded in making wise folk think what a very contemptible thing wealth is—in certain hands—and how impossible it seems to own riches and yet enjoy them!

Assertion is the very atmosphere of America. It is part of the education of its citizens, and supports the general insubordination that levels all ranks and professions to one sole test of superiority—the readiest and quickest method of money-making.

There is no throne, no state, no aristocracy. Every man is the equal of every other man—in theory; and every woman is beautiful and brilliant, and of a remarkable “personality”—also in theory. In reality, America is a huge middle-class community, with no distinctions and no feudal traditions, only entanglements of class, and a liberty of opinion that tends to unbridled insolence where servitude and officialdom are concerned. Such

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a community may be a world's wonder—but not necessarily a world's ideal.

The American knows how to "get" and how to "spend." He is the quintessence of all that is loud, lawish, and extravagant. To him life is a vast, yeasty, frothy tumult, for ever throwing up new combinations of success, and new schemes for wealth and aggrandisement.

It would be impossible to part with the Amazing American without some reference to his generous efforts at grafting the fairest and choicest blossoms of his own sheltered hothouse on the decadent stem of the English aristocracy.

With all his avowed contempt for titles and lineage, the American in his heart of hearts does covet such things—for a successive generation. He loves to drag in a title to gild over his own early insignificance; and as a rule Miss Columbia has no hesitation in striking a bargain with its owner. American marriages are the common resource of imper-

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curious lordlings, and many a bankrupt inheritance owes its restoration to Transatlantic assistance.

But what will be the result of these "arranged" alliances? What benefit will our ancient races derive from this grafting of an anæmic and effete branch of modern civilisation on the sturdy British constitution?

There is no beauty so short-lived as that of the American girl. No physique at once so fascinating and so feeble. The bringing up of the American child is altogether faulty and irrational, and in no way tends to render it robust or healthy. Its youth is as exotic as brief, for at thirty, or even sooner, the American man or woman is a prey to dyspepsia and insomnia, and divers other ills that "flesh is heir to." Flesh treated in the reckless, inconsiderate fashion peculiar to a nation subsisting chiefly on ice-water and "pie," diversified by restaurant delicacies of sixteen courses bolted at express speed!

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In mind, manner, speech, thought, and feeling, the English husband and the American wife are as the poles asunder ! The marriage tie soon becomes irksome and distasteful, and but for mutual complaisance as to its conditions it would be speedily severed, even at the sacrifice of "dollars."

But the American girl does ~~not~~ take marriage seriously. It is something to be endured for the sake of something gained, and which can only be gained by that means. Could, she *buy* a title as she can a jewel at Tiffany's, or a box of candy at Fuller's, she would clinch the bargain without hesitation. "As that is impossible, she barter herself quite cheerfully, having learnt in her own delightful country that marriage is as easily annulled as contracted, and need not for a moment be considered in the light of a life-guarantee !

She gives the man she marries less consideration than the title he owns, or the family jewels that she can wear to a real Court as a real Peeress. She is only bent on having a "good time" under new and hitherto unsampled

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conditions; and she never forgets that her dollars are her own, and divorce a mere matter of mutual convenience!

To the American woman an American husband is merely an appendage or an impediment. But she does not realise that an English matrimonial partner may possess a finer spirit of masterfulness, and has not been trained to believe that a woman—or at least an American woman—is the next best thing to an angel.

Women are women all the world over, and the only way in which the American woman differs from her universal sisterhood lies in the fact that she has been thoroughly spoilt by over-flattery in her own country; has never been taught her place, and therefore is ignorant how to keep it.

Like her male compatriot, she, too, dislikes criticism. Her overweening conceit in herself and her perfections make her less of a companion than a ruler. We are always being told that the American Woman is "just perfect." An epitome of elegance, courtesy,

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and good taste. Well, all I can say is that she is singularly backward in displaying any of these perfections either on her travels, or her sojourns. The first lesson she has to learn when she annexes a title or becomes an English hostess, is that of restraint and composure. These would alone excuse her fearful nasal "twang," her parrot talk, and her loud discordant laughter! But to an American woman they are the hardest lessons life can teach—social life, be it understood.

Thus it would seem that from a physiological and critical point of view marriage between an English man and an American woman is a mistake. Certainly the Transatlantic Duchess is no great acquisition to our Peerage, and it seems somewhat an anomaly that the very people who have openly insulted the name of "aristocrat" should now covet its privileges. That, after long years of strenuous ridicule of English lineage and its chivalrous traditions, they should strain every nerve and spend unexampled wealth on annexing

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these very "absurdities" for their own sons and daughters.

The "glorying" and boasting of American journals over every newly-secured title is on a par with this remarkable inconsistency. They never seem to weary of describing the details of an "alliance"; the *trousseaux*, the presents, and the ceremony itself. As for that last 'function,' it has remained for America to show an amazed world how absolutely repulsive to good taste and modesty the marriage service can be made by the efforts of millionairism.

Is anything more obnoxious to canons of good breeding than an American wedding, with its rehearsals, its blaring of trumpets, its columns of description, its incredible vulgarity that only sees in the solemn union of two lives a pageant for triumphant journalism and kodak effrontery?

It is a pageant as heartless as the planning of the said union. A "show" which only invites a tumultuous, curious, insolent crowd to criticize and compare. A "function"

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(to use again their own favourite expression) for more waving of flags, and beating of drums, and screaming of some greater victory than has fallen to the lot of even its most inventive social geniuses !

Such marriages are a national disgrace ; a public denial of the American boast of "purity and morality." They should take place in strictest seclusion, and only be classed amongst non-successful speculations.

Instead of this the united Title and Dollar boast openly of their degradation, and are heralded in the American journals with such "bold advertisement" as seems good unto a land of Freedom. "Another American man-trap proves successful," "Britannia's Peerage again falls a victim to American beauty and—dollars."

This is the sort of thing American journals love. They parade their shame, and pride themselves on their contradictory rules of "equality." Then they wonder that more sensitive people feel ashamed of them, and only sorry for the straits and adversities that

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have driven some unfortunate portion of nobility into the clutches of American arrogance!

Having dealt with the American man and the American woman individually and collectively, I will now conclude my subject with a few general observations. Having aroused both animosity and wrath, I shall apply a soothing plaster to national self-esteem. For though I may dislike Americans *out* of their own country, I am confidently assured that if I once set foot in that glorious land I should recant all these heresies. I should find them the most hospitable, the most generous, the most delightful of all the nations in the world!

Assuredly it is not for want of invitations that I have left this Amazing Country unvisited. I have been asked to go there, and even to *lecture* there, over and over again! But I have—discourteously—declined. Therefore all I have said respecting Americans may be taken with as many grains—or bushels-full—of salt as they deem fit.

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I have only criticised them as I have found them, and sampled the many by the few.

That I dislike certain things about them and their manners and methods is of course my misfortune. I am hard to please, and by nature critical. I do not like surface effects, and the very brilliance of America is a proof of shallowness.

All the sterling qualities of the philosopher, the thinker, the scholar, and the artist are absent in this great commune of haste, turmoil, and mammon worship.

Their towns are wonderful—so I hear, their inventions marvellous, their government perfect, their social system all that is elegant and refined. Their laws are exceptionally just, and their lawyers as unimpeachably honest as—their police force! In all relations of business, trade, and professions they stand unequalled. They are noisily, if not genuinely, patriotic. They believe in themselves and their greatness and their future. They have the most stupendous buildings, the most terrific railways, the most marvellous

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factories, and produce manufactories that the world can show. They have all the resources of art, learning, and culture at their disposal. What they can't acquire they can buy; and what is not indigenous to the national soil they can annex.

For all this I truly admire them. I have not the slightest doubt that if I ever did set foot in America (which Heaven forefend!) I should be astounded, deafened, bewildered, confused, stunned, and delighted, so as to meet their fondest expectations. But strange to say my prejudices all lie in the opposite direction.

I hate noise and confusion; I dislike trains that go at double-express speed, and may land you in Eternity just as easily as at some distant and amazing city of your earthly destination. I could never admire sky-scrapers, or appreciate lifts that work on a system of "greased lightning." Nor could I appreciate overcrowded "cars" and rude "conductors," whose sole occupation in life is the piteous entreaty to "step lively!"

I have never been able to admire American

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comedy—it is too personal; or American drama—it is too humorous. I love to see Nature as she is; not exploited by the scenic effects of advertisement boards, or the hideous boasts of quack nostrums. I should probably weep over the desecration and vulgarisation of beautiful Niagara, and shudder at the horrors of far-famed Chicago. I have never been educated to appreciate "bargain counters," the loud-voiced illustrations of national fiction, or the insolent personalities of national journalism. For the American newspaper is nothing if not personally and cheerfully libellous. Libel and personality constitute the principal factors in the root source of American humour.

Also, I fear I should manifest no appreciation of "faked-up" art treasures, or even of the genuine article as transported from its ancient and more suitable environment by the aid of American dollars. India and Japan and Italy would seem too sadly out of place in the brand-new magnificence of an American palace.

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I am quite ready to believe that in matters of engineering construction and architectural Brobdingnagianism, America cannot be beaten. That in all big things she "licks creation." But I don't admire big things—set out of all proportion to their surroundings; and I consider a country that imports and encourages child-labour to the numerical extent of 1,700,000 workers in fields, factories, and mines, is not one for universal approbation, or admiration!

True that all countries are more or less faulty, and ill-governed, and poverty-ridden. But America deserves more blame than any other country, because she is wealthy, boastful, and untruthful! She professes with her lips, and smites with her hand. She calls herself and her citizens free, and yet is the veriest slave to a rotten political system, and the tyranny of Tammany Hall!

Such things might be excusable as mistakes, but not as boasts. And it is the boastfulness of Americans over their "perfect" government and institutions and possessions that

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institute unsparing criticism, and frank denunciation.

° They have committed unparalleled sins, and perpetrated hideous atrocities in the past. With vast wealth and vast territories at their disposal they are still unwise enough to make life hideous and repellent for the worker and the child. The amassing of wealth is their sole joy, and an inordinate extravagance seems their ostensible existence! Yet blow they their trumpet never so loudly, wave they their flag never so proudly, they cannot escape the outspoken rebuke so daringly challenged by every action and law of their extraordinary lives!

It remains to be seen how they will yet employ their amazing forces, their tireless activity, their powers of construction.

The fertile, creative spirit which has made America what she is, may, if rightly employed, also make her what she is *not*. Dignified. Fair-dealing. Humane and Just.

Perchance then, that torch of Liberty may serve to enlighten instead of to deceive, and

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with awakened brilliance will banish past crudities and past imperfections into the limbo of forgotten and regretted mistakes.

L'ENVOI

Mr. H. G. Wells has recently written of the *Future of America*. The future of this vast mass of conceit, brag, inhumanity, and inconsistency.

He has summed up all its shortcomings, and criticised its many good points with a kindly hopefulness for which he will, probably, only be abused. He is both mercifully optimistic and candidly just. For an optimism that sees in the American a "marvellous and simple-minded patience waiting for finer understanding and a nobler time" is indeed to be commended!

To read his book is like rushing through a thunderstorm of bewildering effects in a closed motor-car. A sense of personal safety

PERSONAL OPINIONS

and lucidity of mind helps one to beat the outward tumult and confusion. For even a mental tour through the Amazing Continent is a succession of thunder-claps, sheet-lightning, and the pitiless patter of hail-stones!

Mr. Wells' book has thrown more light upon the nation's idiosyncrasies than any I have read. It lessens even Mr. Henry James' simple architectural effects, and turns Mr. Saltus into a mere empty drum.

Braying triumphs, foolish ceremonies, unmeaning shows, childish displays of ingenuity in the spending of wasted wealth, the crimes of unscrupulous acquisition, the false morality, the astounding dishonesty, the waste of life and labour in the strenuous race for riches,—all these are bioscoped in detail by this marvellous book. And through all its strictures and its criticisms marches the writer's own clear Hope.

Hope in the Future of a great and frenzied race; hope for qualities of distinction, patience, and honesty, as yet unremarkable; hope for a culture that will civilise, and a religion

'THE AMAZING AMERICAN!

that will influence the State and the nation; hope that its "will" may prove of finer stuff than its financial morality, and play out the drama of its Future less as a spectacle for other nations to wonder at, than a deep and noble purpose independent of display.

I have said that the American's password, "Liberty," is mainly a frothy, unsubstantial bubble; a thing for ever on the tongue and for ever contradicted by action and example.

Mr. Wells' picture of the immigrant landing with a cargo of hopes, and gradually sinking into the foreign slum-labour market, is a convincing proof of this statement. The making of young American citizens by an educational system of "flag-waving" and meaningless shouts, aided by the absurd bragging of the "Oath of Allegiance," seems to me a very humiliating sort of patriotism; one that has no depth, and no anchorage save that of momentary enthusiasm. It is certainly a startling contrast to turn from a seminary of flag-wavers (being strenuously

PERSONAL OPINIONS

Americanised) to that other awful picture of child-labour as exemplified in *The Jungle*; in the Pennsylvanian coal-mines; in the mills of Paterson; in cotton factories, fields, and workshops; and, worst of all, amidst the flagrant vice of New York streets!

It is once more an amazing instance of the inconsistency of America. Of its faculty for throwing dust in the eyes that seek truth, and deafening the ears that would fain hear it.

After reading Mr. Spargo's *Bitter Cry of the Children*, every American millionaire should hide his head in shame, or should assuredly give himself and his influential brotherhood no rest until they had obliterated this foul stain from their country's future history.

But the Sons of Liberty seem sublimely callous to all that does not touch *personal* interests. They are crazed with money-getting, and little inclined to quarrel with the means of "getting" it, so long as it can be "got."

Turn from the blood and tears and groans of that million of child-labourers, and look

THE AMAZING AMERICAN!

at the lordly palaces of triumphant dollar-dom! Stand amazed at the recent spectacle of imbecile ingenuity as exemplified by a millionaire's New Year banquet, in which men, women, and Pigs (!) feasted together; where professedly decent people sat down in company with ribbon-bedecked "porkers," game-cocks, cats, rabbits, pigeons, and other domestic pets!

Then let us ask ourselves—stolid, sensible, old-fashioned as we may seem—whether any good thing *can* ever come out of this vulgar breed of mammon-worshippers? If even Mr. H. G. Wells' kindly optimism is to be trusted regarding a nation whose past teems with racial horrors and racial crimes; whose present is a ramping, crazy cry for the world's wonderment; whose future is rocked on a troubled sea of uncertainty, and danger, and unacknowledged limitations!

FINIS

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